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# ISLAM IN THE LIGHT OF SHIAISM

BEING  
A TRANSLATION  
OF  
THE SHARIATUL ISLAM (PART I)

BY  
THE LATE MOULANA SYED MOHAMMED SAHAB,  
SON OF HIS HOLINESS, MOULANA  
SYED NAJMUL HASAN SAHAB

TRANSLATED  
WITH SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

BY

A. F. BADSHAH HUSAIN, B. A.,  
*Author of Science and Islamic Tradition, Principles of  
Shia Theology, &c.*

“O Lord, whatever of Truth Thou hast made us to  
understand, make us hold the same, and whatever  
is wanting in us thereof, make that to reach us.”

In the prayer of Our Lord—The present Imam.

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3

## P R E F A C E .

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THE original treatise, of which the present translation is offered to the public, was written to impart in a simple language, an elementary knowledge of the principles and essentials of the Shia creed for the instruction of young readers and new converts to Islam. Had the author lived, we might have had a graduated series of more advanced works ; but, alas ! he was snatched away from amongst us, at so tender an age, by the cruel hand of death, and the Institution for the Propagation of Islam according to Shia views, in connection with which this literary work was being done, has suffered an irreparable loss in the death of this first and almost solitary worker, which it will not be possible to make good for years. Indeed, but for the unfailing zeal of his old revered father, it might have ceased to exist.

The present new translation is made at the wishes of this holy father of the church in his bereavement. Previously, a free translation, rather a treatise based on the Shariatul Islam, was published under the present title. The present translation follows the original closely, every addition is clearly marked off from the Text. No liberty has been taken with the text, except that two chapters have had their places changed, and two pages in the end of the original, dealing with purely legal matters, have been omitted.



The original treatise, being essentially an elementary one, I have tried to make it available for the more advanced readers also, by the addition of supplementary notes, so that, it is hoped, in its present form, all classes of readers may find portions of it useful. Unfortunately, owing to want of space, I have been obliged to be as brief as possible, and in some important places have had to content myself with mere allusions and references, without a word of detail or discussion. The problems briefly touched upon here are dealt with some fullness in my *Principles of Shia Theology and Science and Islamic Tradition*, neither of which is published. My father's *Mazhab-e Aql* is also yet unpublished. The English reader may find further useful information in the translation of *Kanzul Maarifat* which is in the press and to which I have added an Introduction.

On the whole, it is hoped, this little treatise will sufficiently impress the reader that the spirit of our religion is essentially rationalistic, and that there is a mass of evidence in favour of it which is well worth enquiry and serious study.

BARABANKI :

14th October, 1923.

A. F. BADSHAH HUSAIN







THE LATE MAULANA SYED MOHAMMAD SAHIB,  
AUTHOR OF SHARIAT-UL-ISLAM.

## **Biographical Sketch of the Author.**

Born in the illustrious family of the Syeds of Amroha, so well known for the purity of blood in India, lineally descended from the great Imam, Our Lord Ali'bn Musa al-Riza, the author of the Shariatul Islam, Maulana Syed Mohammad Sahab, had the distinction of having the greatest Mujtahids of India for his parents. His father, Maulana Syed Najmul Hasan Sahab, is one of the greatest living Mujtahids of the day, and his mother was the daughter of the famous scholar and divine Mufti Syed Mohammad Abbas Sahab, whose position is patriarchal among the Mujtahids of this country.

He was born at Amroha on the Muhabala day, the 24th Zilhijja 1305 A.H. (1888 A. D.) From the tenderest age he showed great taste and aptitude for literature, philosophy and divinity, and great concern for piety, devotion and religious pursuits. Thus, at a very early age he qualified himself for admittance to the Nazimia College of Divinity under his illustrious father, and soon attained to proficiency in all the various subjects included in the old system of education. Possessed of natural acuteness of mind with marvellous powers of analytical study, he soon specialised in Logic and scholastic philosophy and the various branches of divinity as Law, Tafsir, Hadis, etc. But he soon perceived the necessity of extending his studies beyond the old traditional sphere, and with great zeal and avidity studied comparative religion and did all he could to make himself acquainted with Western sciences and the



Western schools of thought. For literature he had great taste and aptitude. Some of his poems and Qasidas are acknowledged masterpieces. For force and vigour as an orator and preacher he had hardly any equal.

All these accomplishments, combined with his intense religious fervor and zeal for the promulgation of the faith and, we may add, his attractive personal features and capacity for training others, made him an ideal man for the school of missionary work, the Madrasatul Waezin, both the starting and success of which was mainly due to his efforts. To those who know anything of the common lethargy and indifference of the people of this community on these matters it will easily appear that, but for having a son of such parts, the father in this old age would not have been able to take up the responsibilities of this new and difficult work. In fact, it was he that moved his father repeatedly in the matter, and in the one year that he lived after its founding, saw the institution fully launched in life. All was due to his untiring zeal and single-minded efforts.

All promised that the old venerable Mujtahid of Lucknow would be leaving a worthy heir to his holy vocation but, alas! the son was cut off by the cruel hand of death at the tender age of thirty-one. He died on 3rd Jamada II 1337 A. H. (1918 A. D.) leaving a number of unfinished Arabic writings. The Anjumane Muayyedul Ulum, under the auspices of which this translation of his Shariatul Islam is published, was started in his memory.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ أَطَّاهَرِينَ -

## Chapter I.

### 1. EXISTENCE OF GOD.

No sane person can deny the fact that there was a time for him in this world when there was not a trace of his existence. It was some effective cause that brought him forth from beyond the veil of nothingness and clothed him with Existence.

And it is certain that this is not his own work, for in the state of non-existence nothing can be conceived as having any force; and, as existing, it is meaningless to talk of bringing out its own Being. This is accomplishing the accomplished, which is absurd.

Thus it is clear that the existence in question is the effect of the action of another Being as cause. Now if this second existence is also like the first in needing a cause for its existence the same argument will apply to this also, and there will be an infinite regress of causes. In short it will be necessary to postulate the existence of a (supreme self-existent) power apart and above this existence (man) which brought it from non-existence to existence.

This much is a matter fairly well agreed upon. But at this stage there is a difference of views about the creating cause.

Some say it is Nature (acting spontaneously). Others name it *Dahr* or time. Others hold it is Matter. Some



believed in two existences or principles as creators, some in three or more. Others have believed in the existence of a Being who is distinct from, free and far above any of these things; All-perfect and Omnipotent, Eternal and Self-subsistent. Thus he is the creator of Matter and Nature both. None partakes of His eternity. He is one All-powerful Being whose power extends to everything existing or conceivable. His Holy name is 'Allah.'

NOTE.—A full discussion of the philosophical basis of Theism and of antitheistic theories would be quite out of place in a primer like this, and so the author has not attempted it. For these the reader is referred to more advanced works. A simple statement of the Theistic argument may, however, be ventured here for the benefit of the more advanced readers. The problem is this. Here is the world before us. Shall we say it is eternal, self-existent, going on of itself; its laws of motion and change have been eternally what they are and have not been imposed upon it by another power? This is the view of various schools of philosophers designated by various names as materialists, monists, physiologists, etc. There are differences among these relating to points of detail, such as the origin of life, the relation of motion to sensation and so forth. But concerning the whole of Existence they agree that it is the ultimate self-existing reality. In the last paragraph the author has mentioned some of the old speculations corresponding to these. Some of these are too wild, fanciful, arbitrary, and dogmatic to deserve any consideration. We will confine ourselves exclusively to the modern view (Naturalism, we may call it to cover all shades of opinion) and to that part of it only which relates to the self-existence of the world or its ultimate elements, whatever they are and however they act to produce the infinite diversity of forms before us. These philosophers attribute eternity and infinity to matter as well as force, and having posited this eternity, imagine that they have done away with the necessity of creation. And certainly if a thing has been in existence



from all eternity it seems meaningless to talk of its being created. For this eternity there are no other arguments than the physical one on which is founded the doctrines of the indestructibility of matter and persistence of force, and the psychological one which appeals to the impossibility of conceiving creation or annihilation.

It would lead us too far to expose the utter worthlessness of such arguments. The former only shows that with our limited chemical and physical resources we are not able to create or destroy matter or force, and even as such, the doctrine is receiving some hard knocks these days and no one knows what may become of it to-morrow. The latter is a pure fallacy. We try to conceive of creation or annihilation as a transformation from or into nothingness and seek the thing or its elements there in imagination. There could be nothing more absurd. Creation is not transformation. It is a different category altogether to which we are led by reasoning alone and not by observation and experience, so that it is true we are not able to have a mental representation of it.

But whether these arguments about the eternity of the world be sound or unsound, there is another thing which condemns the doctrine.

This is the Law of Sufficient Reason. When a thing is conceivably capable of having been in two or more forms and it is actually in one of these forms there must be sufficient reason why it is in that particular form and not in another. The word 'form' must be taken in the most general sense. Every thing that is special, particular, requires to be accounted for. This is the dictum on which all science and philosophy depends. Else, for everything it could be easily said that it has no cause, it has been so from all eternity. You are compelled to ask why it is just so and not otherwise.

Now the slightest reflection will show that the ultimate constitution of Nature is arbitrary. It has a particular form. It is three dimensional. Mathematicians know it could conceivably have been two or four and dimensional. Again all its laws, however ultimate, are so many specialities. Every particle of matter attracts every other

particle according to a fixed law of mass and distance. Why do the particles attract at all? Might they not as well repel? Then why this particular law of inverse square of distance? Might not the force decrease or increase in another proportion? There is nothing in nature about which there are not a hundred possibilities possible.

To say of such a thing that it is the Ultimate Reality, requires no further explanation, is to condemn philosophy once for all, and indeed this is the only course possible for the so-called philosophers of Monism, Materialism, and what not, in these ultimate problems. Dr. Paul Carus admits that the ultimate constitution of things is arbitrary and questions about it are unanswerable, and so he condemns these as illegitimate problems. In Spencers' philosophy the impossibility of carrying back our explanations indefinitely is made a ground of his agnosticism. But agnosticism is merely philosophical bankruptcy.

What escape, then, from the Theistic conclusion? If we account for the formal and conditioned in the world by something which is again formal and conditioned we get no further. The problem remains where it was. We must get beyond the world to a cause that is conditioned in no way: to whom the Law of Sufficient Reason does not apply—in that He is without form, without limitation, without any speciality whatever. He must be such that whatever He is, He can be That only and could not be otherwise. Thus His attributes are as essential to his existence and to each other as equiangularity to an equilateral triangle. To such an existence we reach by rigidity of reasoning. Indeed arbitrariness in the effect can only be explained by a Supreme Unconditioned Will, who does what He likes and "is not to be questioned about His actions." (Quran 21, 33). "And verily to thy Lord is the end of everything." (*Ibid.* 53, 140).

There are many other problems about Theism and its manifold forms and many interesting matters about antitheistic theories. They are dealt with fully in my Principles of Shia Theology and my father's 'Mazhab-i-Aql.'

## 2. MORAL VALUE OF BELIEF IN GOD.

To put the matter briefly, those that hold Matter or Nature (its supposed vital force) to be the sole generator of the Universe are not committed to bow down before any one as their Deity so as to hold his worship and obedience incumbent upon themselves. Those on the other hand who believe in a Necessary Existence as the creator of the world, whether regarding Him as One or many are 'Men of Creed' or 'Religionists.'

Every creed inculcates belief in a certain set of doctrines (more or less dogmatic) and has special forms of worship and code of laws, and as such has a distinctive appellation. (Much might be said in favour of adoption of a fairly reasonable form of religion even apart from the question of its intrinsic truth. Tr.). We have to see whether there is better chance of eternal happiness in submission to the restrictions imposed by religion or in living at large altogether unfettered by its trammels.

It must be clear to everyone that unless a people have a sovereign and code of laws they cannot live in peace, and neither life nor property nor honour can be immune from danger. But it is equally obvious that this arrangement is not effective enough to reach and control all sins and crimes among mankind. To say nothing of the secret sins of the heart, it is valueless in cases of crimes successfully effected without detection. Theft, murder, adultery, and all sorts of crimes can and often do elude detection. In such cases the whole system of temporal government



avails nothing and there is no real security of life and property. Thus it stands to reason that there should exist a moral government whose controlling force extends equally to the plain and hidden actions of mankind, whose awe fills the mind whether one is in his closet or in a broad open place, and sometimes affects more strongly in the former state. In such a government it is necessary to postulate all sorts of power in the governor to award punishment and reward according to deserts and also omniscient knowledge of the minutest details and secrets to be able to do so successfully. Such a view (of an actually existing moral government) is not possible to any but the religious believer.

NOTE.—The point here emphasised upon is the intensity of moral consciousness due to a more or less vivid realization of an existing moral Governor of the universe. Every one knows the difference not only of intensity but of kind also in the remorse attendant upon a moral delinquency and that in the case of crime. The latter is felt with a savour of something like treason. For such a feeling, it is necessary that the act must be the violation of the command of a person, as king, etc., and it must be proportionably more pungent in case of violation of the command of God. It is very different in the case of violation of the rules of a corporation, and when there is no external command to be obeyed there is at most only a sense of self-degradation and nothing more. There is no feeling of terror and other complex emotions involved in what is called God-fearingness. Also the idea of punishment attached to the crime helps to keep up the sense of its magnitude in consciousness. Hence it is that missionaries frequently complain that Hindus have no conception of sin proper. They have no personal God with reference to whom the proper feeling could arise. Of course taking by itself this is no argument for the truth of a religion

but granting the existence of God it creates a presumption in favour of revealed religion. When mankind have advanced enough to feel this desideratum, it is but reasonable to hope that God would have made some provision for it. In short just as the code of laws of an efficient temporal government prevent people from visible malpractices, in the same way religion is meant to exercise this control over the hearts of people.

A man who has no sense of religious responsibility can neither be trusted in his ordinary actions nor in his transactions with other men. But for it blood can never remain pure. It is this that sanctifies the bond of love and relationship—even personal aversion cannot be trusted to without it. Practically the man is a moral outlaw who may at any time become a danger to the state as well as the public, the great controlling factor being absent from his mind.

If all this fails to convince there is another side too, which may well be considered. To quote the words of a divine teacher, said to an atheist, "If what thou sayest were true that God and his obedience, Reward and punishment at the last day, Heaven and Hell are nothing, are merely cobwebs of the brain, the utmost that we suffer is that our pains to adhere to their restrictions will prove fruitless and gain us nothing, but what will be thy fate if what we say is true and these things turn out to be realities?"

True it is that the fetters of religion make life somewhat inconvenient and cut us off from freedom and some of its

pleasures, yet there is security here from many of possible dangers in the hereafter, to which those who do not accept it expose themselves. Every sensible person would strive to save himself as far as possible from such dangers. Thus (from prudential considerations, if no others) it would appear that atheism (in whatever form it may be) is a very risky matter which should be avoided (except on extremely cogent reasons).

NOTE.—It would appear that the utmost that is ever said against the Theistic belief and religion in general is that there is no proof of the truth, that the arguments adduced in their favour are not conclusive. No body claims to have proved that there is no God, no spiritual world, no Hereafter. The above paragraph is meant for the admonition of such persons (and there are many of them) who having preconceived notions of the insufficiency of religious evidences turn away from them with a smile and would not be induced to enquire closely into them. It may be that while external evidences may not be very prominent so as to attract the attention of a merely casual observer there may be internal evidences that can appear only to those who observe from within as believers. Certainly this is not so in the case of our religion—there is no paucity of arguments and evidences for unbelievers, but even if it were so, it would not be wise for sceptics and atheists to turn away with incredulity and enquire no more. The mere fact that for all they can say or reason, there is no proof that the spiritual system we contend for is baseless ought to make them cautious in the matter. This is all that Our Lord Jafarul Sadiq wanted to impress on the atheist in the tradition quoted above.

This much being agreed upon the next and the chief question for us is, which of the various conflicting religions, of which there are so many in the world, are we to give our assent to? Every one claims truth for his own and



regards the others as false. Manifestly the casting away of sheer infidelity can be of little good if the religion that is embraced is equally false and no attempt is made to attain to the truth—the true religion. The danger of the hereafter remains essentially the same. (It may be greater in some cases. Tr.).

Fortunately, as between the various forms of religion it is not difficult for commonsense to decide. The best and simplest method is this. Every religion has some principles or essential doctrines on which subordinate beliefs are based. The rest is matter of law and discipline which is to be followed after the acceptance of the fundamental doctrines and beliefs. It will suffice if the former alone are duly considered and weighed. Which ever religion this balance of reason declares for—which ever principles appear sound, reasonable and faultless—that deserves to be accepted as true. Having been compelled by reason to give our assent to the essential doctrines, it would be pure nonsense to question the legislative portions which derive their validity unexceptionably from the truth of the former. They must be accepted without a moment's hesitation.

NOTE.—Of course this should not be understood to imply that moral teachings and the character of law and civilization taught by a religion may not be a part of the evidence of the truth or falsity of that religion. But this test is to be applied with caution. Moral matters are ever clothed with sentimental prejudices which it is very difficult to divest ourselves from. It is only those trained in moral philosophy that can calmly reflect upon the wide divergences among mankind on the same

moral matters. Who does not know there are wide differences of sentiment among different nations about polygamy, *purda* system, slavery and so forth and everyone of these holds the views of the others to be simply absurd and disgraceful. Western nations ever charge us with some of these things and regard these sufficient to condemn our religion. All such objections are and must remain inconclusive unless discussed upon in a patient philosophical spirit, which it is so rare to find among religious disputants.

Finally it is true, as the author says, no question is to be made concerning more matters of law and discipline. In the latter, training in the habit of submission to divine commands is the main thing in spirit, and uniformity of practice in the whole community is the chief desideratum so far as the form is concerned. This explains the rigidity of the law about the minutiae of these things, unimportant as all of them might appear to be. In purely legal matters also, regulation of practice is frequently the chief thing aimed at, it may however be that some things like the eating of pork may be forbidden owing to evils which it is not possible for the average intelligence to discover. In all these things, it is accordingly the best to have the regulative portions untouched and attend to principles only as the chief determining factor about the truth or falsity of a religion.

### 3. TEACHINGS OF ISLAM ON GOD AS COMPARED WITH OTHER RELIGIONS.

Accordingly we now place Islam side by side with other religions and compare their principles or essentials in the light of reason. We state the principles of Islam according to the Shia view, for the teachings of other sects are in many cases widely different and in many their position is not clear. We will first take the view about the Creator of the world and His Attributes.

Islam teaches that it is essential for the world to have a Creator—not only the world we see and know, but all possible worlds and forms of existence. There are manifest signs of an Intelligent Hand in the creation. Every advance in science is so much accumulating evidence of the exquisite design and providence that pervades nature. The world is full of wonders of creation, whose harmony and design cannot escape the attention of the most careless observer. And the wonder increases the deeper we go. The unity, harmony and symmetry is seen to obtain in the most delicate structure and it is this that makes the study of science so captivating. All goes to show that so well regulated a system can neither be outcome of chance, nor is the product of any blind, unintelligent vital force or Nature. It is rather the handiwork of an intelligent Omnipotent Will shaping things according to an intelligible design and uniformity of principle. He is seen to be a necessary Existence so that but for Him nothing would exist. As Omnipotent He created things out of nothingness and as Omniscient shaped them according to a well-regulated design.

Also it is a cardinal doctrine of Islam that this Creator is one, One without a second, has in Himself all perfections and is free from defects and limitations. As such, he is Formless, Bodiless ; nothing savouring of corporeality can be attributed to Him. He is knowing, powerful, wise, true Living, eternal.

Of other religions some agree with us in this concep-



tion of God. Some disagree, some imputing corporeal attributes to Him, others making him a complex of several units or factors, others conceiving it possible for him to incarnate in bodily forms. It would require too much space to refute each and all of these unworthy untenable conceptions, so we content ourselves with proof of Unity of God, which, if sound, would suffice to dispel all common views on this subject.

It is necessary to hold God to be essentially Eternal and a necessary Existence, else it would require Creator to account for His Existence. Now the Essentially Eternal and Necessarily Existent can only be One it can not be many for if there are many, they must be, at least, equally All-perfect, as such are they to be conceived as subordinate to or independent of each ? On the first supposition the subordinate one cannot be rightly held to be a God, as subordination is defect and limitation. On the other supposition, neither is all-powerful, for he has no power over his colleague. That too takes away the essential mark of divinity from him. And if it be supposed that they work together by mutual advice and understanding, everyone of them is dependent upon the other, so neither is God in the correct sense of the word. If they are supposed to have different domains, the question arises whether the will of one can be checked and withheld by the other's force. If it can, one is less powerful ; if not, one is not all-powerful. If finally the two gods are supposed to be destitute of the capacity

of opposition, that one does only what the other does (or in harmony with it) then both are of limited power and neither is correctly speaking a God.

Thus all religions which inculcate belief in more gods than one are proved to be false. The creator of the world must be One Essentially eternal, Necessary Existence.

NOTE.—1. By “essentially eternal” the author wants to emphasise that He exists eternal *per se*, independent of any other eternal reality. It is possible to conceive of material existence, say, as the eternal effect of an Eternal Will, willing it from all eternity. In this case only the Will is divine, not the effect, notwithstanding that it is eternal. Mere eternity does not constitute divinity. Thus in our argument for theism stated in the note above it would appear that the granting of the eternity of the world has no bearing whatever on it. God must not only be eternal, but eternal *per se*, essentially eternal.

By “necessary existence” it is sought to make it clear that God would exist though nothing ever existed. It is not that because the world exists, God also exists, so that if the world did not exist at all, God too might not have existed. The correct position is, because the existence of the world is known to be a possibility, God necessarily exists, whether the world ever existed or not. The argument may be thus summarised. Every thing that is possible is possible in virtue of something which is actual. Flying is possible because of the real existence of air. Thus the sum total of all possible existence depends for its actuality on something in which there is no character of mere possible existence so as to need another existence to depend upon.

NOTE.—2. Unity of God is selfevident and hardly calls for proof. The argument in the text disproves the existence or possibility of a second God. It may be added that it is unphilosophical to assume the existence of another God. When the one we are led to by mono-theistic arguments is sufficient to account for all things. Existences are not to be multiplied at one’s caprice.

The scientific evidence for the unity of God is the Unity of nature. Mill in his Three Essays on Religion appeals especially to it, Our Lord Ali has used it in one of his famous orations in the *Nahajul Balagat*. "He would see that the Creator of the ant is the Creator of the tree owing to the delicacy of the differentiation of all things and the intricacy of the differences in living things."

#### 4. THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

There are of two kinds, Positive and Negative.

NOTE.—Strictly speaking the latter are not attributes at all. The term is an abuse of language. But in the attempt to form a conception of the Supreme Being we have to take account not only of the positive qualities, *i. e.*, elements that enter into the connotation of His Blessed Name, but also the forms of existence which are necessarily excluded from His conception. For an adequate conception the two are complementary to each other. Moreover as Spencer says "The saying what a thing is not, is, in some measure, saying what it is, since if, of all possible assertions respecting it, one is cancelled the cancelling, by diminishing the number of possible assertions implies an incipient definition. A series of statements of what it is not, excluding one possibility after another, becomes eventually a line of exclusions drawn round it—a definition of it."

The positive attributes are those which are essential for His Existence, so that the existence of their opposites is an impossibility for Him and they are inseparable from His Being or Essence.

The first is Knowledge. Ignorance is a fault and Imperfection. But obviously God must be perfect and so free from all fault and shortcomings. Hence it is proved that God must be knowing. All that exists in the world, open or secret, whole or part, God's knowledge comprehends



all of it (to the minutest detail). This quality may also be inferred directly by observation of His handiwork in Nature, whose wonders fill the greatest minds with amazement and admiration. Any body who gives a moment's reflection to the ordinary things round about him, Heavens and Earth, Sun and Moon, Day and Night, mountains and rivers, plants, animals and men, and ponder seriously over their design and manifold wonders of structure, can not fail to be convinced that such things could not be brought into existence without intelligence, which proves that their Maker is certainly a Wise Knowing Being.

The things that people know by means of eyesight, God knows without the agency of an eye, hence (in reference to such knowledge) He is called the seeing "*Basir*." Similarly without the instrumentality of ear He knows what others require that organ for apprehending. In this sense He called "*Samii*" or hearing. And generally since God knows all that others only perceive through the senses, hence he is given the appellation of "*Mudrik*" (Perceiving.) Again since God knows the good and benefit of everything as well as its evil and peril, and with this knowledge he designs or creates what is good and abstains from what is evil, hence in reference to such kind of knowledge He is called *Murid* 'willing' or *Karih* 'Abstaining'. On this view it will appear that God's willing and abstaining is only a particular kind or mode of His knowledge and not a distinct faculty as in his creatures.) Some however understand by these appellations that God

approves of good actions on the part of his creatures and disapproves the opposite. On this view this is a distinct attribute apart from knowledge.

NOTE.—It will be observed that the various Attributes of God are our way of conceiving His infinite Inconceivable Existence, and so the terms in which we try to form our conception of Him are to be understood with infinitely large qualifications. All the terms we can ever use are derived from our own finite, limited personality as the merest student of philosophy knows but there must be infinite difference between the creating and the created. Thus we have to choose between either having no conception whatever, or having an admittedly imperfect, inadequate conception. Now, not only is the former a mere impossibility (for to believe in a thing without having any notion of it is clearly absurd), but the very argument that leads us to recognise His Existence characterises Him as such and such, Perfect Infinite Absolute etc., and these give us a conception, however imperfectly we may be able to realise it or even understand its elements in all their perfection. So though these elements are essentially in terms of our mind (for we can have no other terms at all) it does not follow that they are essentially incorrect. What we have to do is to divest these terms of all implications of finitude or limitation and we will arrive at a notion (if not a conception) as correct as it is possible for us to have.

Thus of God's Knowledge, it may be said that it is infinitely superior not only to our knowledge or any knowledge, however perfect or omniscient, but to anything we can understand by the term knowledge. It may be as far above knowledge as knowledge is above sensation or, I may say, its physiological counterpart, nervous irritation. Yet inconceivable as it must be to us, it is right on our part to represent it to us in our terms as knowledge, as (1) though there cannot

be any similarity between the Creating and the created, yet there cannot be absolute disparity either. His knowledge is after all the Creator of knowledge in us. It is therefore related to it in the (inconceivable) category of creative cause. It cannot be wholly different, therefore, though infinitely superior. (2) The argument for the existence of God leads directly to belief in His knowledge in our sense—that is to say, this is the minimum that cannot be denied, it may be something much more but certainly includes it as a phase of it. Also the world bears marks of intelligence in our human sense. So does will also imply knowledge.

Similar remarks apply to every other attribute. We divest the terms of all implications of finitude and limitation and so form an indefinite, imperfect, inadequate notion which still is not essentially incorrect. This is the highest we can reach. The author has therefore been careful, even in his limited scope, to explain the qualifications that have to be made in understanding the various appellations of God. Our Lord Ali was very careful in this respect and his orations are full of expositions showing the corrections that have to be made in applying these terms to God. Many things evincing a profound insight in philosophy come out in these explanations. Some of these are discussed in my Science and Islamic Tradition and Principles of Shia Theology. Thus of God's Knowledge he says there is no medium between Him and the known things; in other words that His knowledge is not representative, *i.e.*, in the form of images of things as it is in our case. The subject is too metaphysical to be discussed here.

Those who have read H. Spencer's First Principles will see that he altogether ignores these qualifications and thus taking the terms altogether in our human senses is easily able to show that they contradict each other in the case of God. This radical error pervades the whole of his reasoning (borrowed from Mansels' Metaphysics). Agnostic reasonings thus rest on affirmations which no sensible theist would think of making.



2. *Power*.—Weakness is a defect and so is far below the dignity of the Necessary Existence. Hence it is inferred that He is Powerful with power of discretion, that is to say, He is not obliged to do anything nor to refrain from it. He is not a necessarily acting force as sun or fire which must shine and heat bodies perforce and cannot act otherwise unless through the agency of some other force. God can annihilate the whole world in an instant and can create a thousand others in their place. Of course this Omnipotence should not be supposed to stretch to absurdities. Things that involve a rational impossibility, so that their very conception is impossible, must be excepted. Here it is not the power at fault but the nature of the thing or act in question. Thus no power can unite two contradictories in one and the same thing, or take away both at the same time. Similarly no power can make a thing both existent and non-existent, or neither existent nor non-existent at the same time. Omnipotence can control and effect such things as are not *per se* impossible but are physically outside the power of man or any creature whatever, such as turning water into a stone, changing clay into wood, making trees speak, turning a pebble into gold, finishing thousand leagues of journey in an instant. The effecting of such things as these is always possible to God's omnipotence. Many ignorant persons do not distinguish between rational and physical impossibility and so deny the possibility of a miracle.

As regards those things that in the eyes of reason are blameable or involve evil and mischief—all these

are certainly within God's unlimited power, but since He is wise, and such actions are beneath His dignity He does not do these things. Indeed, with this specification, they may be said to be impossible by themselves for Him.

As it is always possible for Omnipotence to make anything speak, so that from it sound of intelligible articulate sounds may be heard—with reference to this particular power one of His attributive names is *Mutakallim* which means He can create speech in a tree or anything else.

3. *Life*.—Since knowledge and power are distinctive features of life, unless one were living, one cannot be conceived to be knowing or acting by self-determination. Hence, God is living (of course in a different sense from that in the case of ourselves as understood by biologists).

4. *Truth*.—Falsehood is an evil and it has been shown that moral evils do not behove God, hence it must be admitted that He is truthful.

5. *Eternity*.—Since God is Necessary Existence this means that there can never be a time when He is non-existent whether in the past or future. He is therefore Eternal and Everlasting that is perpetual. Words such as *Azali*, *Abadi*, *Sarmadi*, *Baqi* express this attribute.

These attributes are called positive or Essential attributes that are held to be "*Ainezat*" (His very Exis-

tence) or inseparable from His Nature or rather inseparably constituting his very Being. This means that He is all Himself and has nothing external to Himself. Thus, as knowing, He is not to be conceived as something apart from His knowledge which is superadded to His Essence, as in the case of man who is, once ignorant and afterwards knows by instruction. (He, on the other hand, is Essentially Knowing, and is nothing if not Knowing.)

Again it must be understood that His Being (or essence or nature if the words be used) unites in itself all perfections like knowledge and power which are ever essential to it. These are mere modes of interpretation to our finite minds. Really He has pure Single Nature which is all-perfect.

NOTE.—The last paragraphs must be carefully understood. God's attributes are inseparable, indistinguishable from His nature so that He cannot be conceived even apart from them, just the so-called properties of geometrical figures are essential features of those figures and they cannot be conceived apart from them. Equiangularity is no mere attribute or property but constitutes the very essence of an equilateral triangle. Exactly similar is to be conceived the relation of God to His so-called attributes. Again it is important to bear in mind that these attributes are not different from each other—not only do they imply each other, but really they are identical. His Knowledge is not something distinct from His Power and these it is the same thing as His Will and justice and so forth. These conceptions, particularly this latter, it is very difficult to realize. That is because we use human terms and are unable to conceive what they may mean in the case of God. If we knew God's Knowledge fully it would appear that it was the same thing as His Will, Power and



what not. It must be remembered that God's nature and attributes are too high above us to be conceivable by us with any approach to accuracy. Anything savouring of distinction and complexity exists only in our limited human conception. It is unfortunate that in this small book we cannot afford sufficient space to show that all this purest conception of monotheism is based not on the metaphysical reasonings of scholastic divines, but is derived from the express teachings of the Imams. The advanced reader is strongly recommended to peruse the traditions in the second book of Kafi and the orations of Our Lord Ali in Nahajul Ba'laqat.

*Relative attributes.*—A part from essential attributes these are recognised by certain attributes based on the former and having particular reference to his dealings with creatures. These give rise to such appellations as Benign, Merciful, Bestower, Creator, Tender, Giver of life, Cause of death, etc. These it is not necessary to be at all times predicable of God as a matter of actuality. Similarly in a general way it may be said that every act of a commendable nature can give rise to an appellation or attribute of God (for He is the Living force behind all that is virtuous and good, and at least approves of such actions on the part of His creatures). But if they have implications of defect in them, or are not to be found in the Quran or the traditions of the Prophet or Imams, it is not fit to call God by such names. Thus Aqil (intelligent) Zaki, Sakhi (generous) though meaning nearly the same as Hakim (Wise) and Munim (bountiful) yet usage has associated the senses of former with purely human implications. Similarly Makir (Plot layer), Mustahzi (Jester) these have very low implications. According to our system

of divinity only such names should be used as are found in the Quran and traditions. These are called "The Excellent Names" but there is difference as to their number.

*Negative attributes* are those that cannot be predicated of God. They are impossible. It is those that imply defect or imperfection. Thus it is proved that God is not complex—neither has He mental nor physical (bodily) complexity; nor is He a part of another complex—for structure and composition implies dependence (of one part on another) and God is free from all this. Again God has no corporeal existence for (apart from bodily limitations) body must be subject to change (birth and decay) while God is eternal. Having no body He can have no bodily associations or parts. Nor is God of the nature of substance or attributes for these are kinds of contingent forms of existence while He is Necessary existence and cannot be akin to the former. Nor has He any natural abode for Him as this would make Him dependent (apart from limitation). Nor does His Existence depend upon Time, nor can He incarnate; nor can He be compounded with anything. Similarly is not subject to change, has nothing of physical pleasure or pain, has no bodily associations whatever. Thus motion, rest, length, breadth, weight, mechanical attributes cannot be attributed to Him. None has seen Him with the eye, nor can anyone see Him, neither in this world nor in the next. This is a mere impossibility, for eye can see only what is corporeal and

material, which God is not. "Eyes do not perceive Him" says the Quran (VI, 103) to this effect. Those who hold such intuition as possible in the literal sense are deceived by metaphorical expressions, where the meaning is perfect faith or (relatively) perfect knowledge or the perception of the effects of His power and grace in creation. Thus Our Lord Ali says "How can I worship a God whom I have never seen," meaning surely that unless he had understood all about his divinity.

It may be remarked once more that since God is Necessary Existence who must be independent of everything else, God is Self-sufficient, *i. e.*, does not depend upon anything in any respect neither in relation to His nature, nor His attributes, nor can He in any way stand in need of anything.

The slightest reflection will convince any sensible man of the truth of these Islamic doctrines and the untenableness of any opposite views.

## 5. JUSTICE OF GOD AND OTHER MORAL PROBLEMS.

NOTE.—(Logically this subject should be treated of in continuation of the attributes of God and we do so accordingly in this translation. The author had however put it at the end as it involved marked differences between Shia and Sunni positions on this and its subsidiary problems).

The true teachings of Islam are also positive on this that since God should be free from all defects and evils, His actions also should be such. For if His actions are



held to be liable to evil, it will have to be supposed either that He wilfully approved of this or that He was unable to resist it. On the first supposition He is not all-perfect (lacking in perfect goodness), on the second He is powerless. For this reason the Shias hold God to be just and count this among the cardinal doctrines essential for true faith. (Absolutely the term, rightly understood, is of wide application, being co-extensive with goodness of God, etc.) It means that He never leaves any good thing undone and never does anything evil. In short, like His nature, His actions are also free from all blemishes. (With particular reference to His dealings with men it means that). He never oppresses any body; when He promises a thing He fulfils it; rewards the virtuous and punishes the wicked, unless in His Grace he sees fit to pardon them.

NOTE:—God being absolute, independent, His actions are self-determined, that is, in accordance with His Infinite perfect goodness, justice meaning nothing but strict conformity to the principle of action thus determined. Lack of justice would therefore involve the ridiculous conception of an unprincipled capricious God. Under such a God there could be no such thing as uniformity anywhere in nature. Anything could be anything at any time. Thus the conception of a just God is the only one agreeable to sound reason and philosophy. Among other absurdities it would appear that injustice is no definite course of action. If the right course of action is avoided there is no limit to the number and forms of wrong that can be inflicted and yet there can be no preference of one over the other. Hence in the infinite possibilities nothing is really possible, there being no determining factor.

It will also be observed that on this view of justice, *i. e.*, harmony with a self-determined course of goodness, justice and mercy are not

incompatible as the ignorant, and some superficial philosophers, too, think. From our point of view one action may be called one of justice, the other of grace and mercy, but in God's case, they are all one. Hence the Quran in Sura Rahman speaks even of the horrors of hell as items of God's grace and favour for which gratitude is due.

The question of the justice of God on the face of it appears in no way a very significant problem, but since in connection with it there have arisen many dissensions on subsidiary ethical problems, the question occupies a very significant position in Islamic Theology and sectarian controversy. Some of these are briefly touched upon here.

1. One contested point is about the intrinsic good or evil of moral actions. According to the Ashaari School (*i.e.*, the generality) of the Sunnis nothing is good or evil by itself. Truth and falsehood, justice and tyranny, marriage and adultery are alike to reason. In the eye of reason the bow of worship to God and that to Satan are all alike. Only what God has commanded us is to be considered good, what He has forbidden is evil. The Shias, on the other hand, hold that irrespective of religious commandments there is real merit or demerit in different courses of action, and it is because a certain thing is good that God commands it, and because the other is bad that He forbids it. In most cases commonsense suffices to determine whether a course of action is good or bad. In some cases, it is true, it finds itself at a loss, but after all it is certain that it is either good or bad in the given conditions. For the first, instance the unanimity of moral verdict about truth and falsehood, justice and tyranny among all nations of the

world ; the religious and irreligious alike hold lying to be condemnable and truth to be commendable.

Moreover, if the validity of moral merit and demerit depends entirely upon Religious law, it is to be asked, how do we know that obedience to that Law is really good and its opposition the reverse. It would be reasoning in a circle to prove that too on the basis of the Law.

According to these Ashaari Sunnis it is possible that God may denounce and forbid truth and make lying obligatory on us. It is also possible that He may make obligatory upon us things that are beyond our power and strength. He may also give preference to the inferior over the superior and make a liar his apostle, as, after all, nothing is intrinsically evil.

NOTE:—Except the limited section of Mutazalites who are Rationalists all the Sunnis subscribe to the Ashaari view of religious philosophy. The founder of the sect Abul Hasan Ashaari was formerly a disciple of a Mutazali teacher. Once the latter being unable to vindicate the justice of God in dealing with persons dying at different ages. Ashaari severed off from him and taught that there was nothing right or wrong, all depends upon God's pleasure and will. This utter humiliation of reason found favour among the traditionists and the masses generally who had strong interest for the integrity of the creed, but had not the intellectual capacity to vindicate it against the growing scepticism nor the moral courage to disclaim absurd doctrines.

Another point of difference is that according to the Shias God never acts aimlessly (that is without design). All His actions are based on wisdom and intelligible purpose. Heavens and earth, sun and moon, rivers, moun-



tains, deserts, birds, beasts, trees, plants, herbs and medicines, stones, flowers all have their purpose in the universal design. Even an ant or mosquito is never born in vain. Nothing is done without a purpose and object.

The other sect holds the opposite view. It may be that some purpose may be traceable in everything, but it is not that God's actions are determined by purposive considerations. (This, they think, detracts from His freedom, independence and Omnipotence, etc.). Going to extremes they hold that there is no divine purpose in the sending of apostles or the scriptures. All is aimless, like, as it were, to the actions of one mentally irresponsible.

3. Another hotly contested problem is the famous one of liberty and necessity. The Shias hold that whatever man does, he does with his own power, choice and will. His actions, good and bad, are all his own. God has no hand in the business, only the power and liberty which man possesses is bestowed upon him by God. Man is responsible for the way in which he uses the power so entrusted to him.

Contrary to this, the Ashaaris hold that man is not the independent author of his own actions. God is the real author of his actions behind him. (God impulses him to do this thing or that according to His sweet will). Thus faith and infidelity, virtue and vice, devotion and its neglect, acts of charity and good, or vices like theft

and adultery—none of these is the work of men by themselves. God has caused these things to be done through them as His instruments. In short man by himself is powerless and incapable of virtue or vice of his own accord. It is clear that on this view commands and prohibitions which fill the Quran and the Holy Law are all useless, and praise and blame, reward and punishment, Heaven and Hell are all unmerited and vain. A little reflection will show that human actions are of two sorts. *A* walks down the stairs, *B* rolls down the slippery marbles. *A* moves his limbs to do a certain thing, *B* is caught with shaking palsy. A man who is unable to differentiate between the two can never be regarded as possessed of even a bit of common sense. The first set of actions are voluntary, the other set are not his actions at all. They are done in spite of him and in these certainly he is the innocent victim of external causes. To ignore this manifest distinction and to declare that in either case he is equally helpless is the height of absurdity. God's command and prohibitions, reward and punishment relate to the first set of actions. If man were alike powerless in regard to these, it would be unjust and oppressive to command him to do anything. God is far above this.

NOTE.—The nonsense of Fatalism which is here combated gets an air of philosophical importance from the repeated discussion of Liberty and Necessity (which is a problem of psychology and quite distinct from this) in philosophical writings. It would lead us too far beyond our limits to discuss the thorny question in this elementary book. It must be remembered that psychological truths are open to direct

observation by introspection. The difficulties arise only in giving a satisfactory, consistent account of them. Consciousness gives direct testimony of power of choice and inhibition of opposing impulses. In mental matters consciousness of a power is power itself, and it is the neglect of the use of this power that constitutes moral responsibility. This power is relative, decreasing with past habits, yet in the most depraved conditions, the consciousness of the power and hence the power itself to resist temptation remains, and in many well-known cases it had succeeded in effecting wonders. The subject is treated at some length in my Principles of Shia Theology.

But the Fatalistic position is based not on psychology but on divinity. One popular argument is this. God has foreknowledge of our actions. His knowledge cannot be falsified. Hence our doing a particular thing is certain and we cannot resist it. The sophistry consists first in taking only a part of God's foreknowledge into account. If God foreknows that I will steal, He also foreknows that I will do it out of my own free will and without compulsion. That leaves me as responsible as ever. Again there is inversion of the natural order of the relation of knowledge to its object. The former depends on the latter, not the latter on the former. God foreknows my stealing only because I am to steal. If I were not to steal, there would have been nothing about this in God's Eternal Foreknowledge.

4. Another point of difference is about the grace of God which Shias hold to be morally incumbent upon Him, while Sunnis deny this. By grace is understood that action on the part of God which would help to bring His creatures nearer to His devotion and obedience and facilitate their moral correction. By "morally incumbent on God" it is meant that the doing of this is reasonable, and so necessary for the All-good and its neglect is blameable. Thus it is held necessary for God to do such things as the



sending of guides and apostles (under proper conditions and in proper circumstances), promising reward and warning against peril, and the like, which are calculated only to help people in their self-correction, not to compel them in this. Thus if a king desires a servant or subject to grow a garden in a place where there is no well nor much population, it is necessary for him to arrange for the digging of the well and the sending of labourers to the place and make other provision for these things, so as to facilitate the work he desires to be done. If he does not do so he will spoil his own purpose. But the Ashaari Sunnis deny any such moral necessity for God and so do not admit His Grace as something essential.

5. The Shias hold that it is necessary for God to command His creatures to do or abstain from doing things that are suitable or otherwise. This is called obligation 'Taklif' (or imposing duty), in law and is considered a desirable thing. It is evident that God is pleased with certain actions and displeased with others. Now unless He himself directs His creatures they could have no means of knowing what He desires. So it is necessary for God to apprise His creatures of His pleasure concerning things on which unaided human reason cannot pronounce a decision. The Sunnis hold such obligation to be unfit for God and (as stated above) hold nothing to be morally incumbent upon Him. This implies indifference of God to moral matters. God has created men with strong passions of appetite and anger, and in their natural state

has not inspired them with a knowledge of the evil and good of all things. So if He does not Himself instruct people about these things He would be indirectly the cause of all the evil they do, and this is obviously vicious.

NOTE.—There are few things which are not capable to be virtuous or vicious under different conditions and from different standpoints. Even if with due insight into circumstances of the case we can ascertain the good and evil of different courses of action, it is difficult to ascertain which standpoint agrees best with God's design and pleasure. Animal sacrifice from one point of view is an unmeaning barbarous custom, from another an excellent moral training. Who is to decide definitely which of these two standpoints agrees best with God's pleasure?

This obligation, however, according to the Shias is limited to the working capacity of the creatures. God never orders what it is beyond our power to do. The other sect holds this too as possible for God.

6. Finally as we have seen above, according to the Shias God never does what is evil nor lets anything meet and necessary be left undone. The Sunnis on the contrary hold that He can do anything evil (though that would then be called good); for according to them good is nothing but what God does or ordains.

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## CHAPTER II.

### APOSTLESHIP.

Belief in the reality of a divine system of mission for the guidance and, may be, for the government of the world is a cardinal doctrine of Islamic belief. It is necessary that from time to time a man commissioned by

God, should appear to convey His commands to His creatures and make them follow the divine Code of Laws. It is obvious that as the Elect of God, he should be reliable in every respect, free from all sins, superior in all respects to all creation, and between him and God there should be no medium except angels (for there is no other creation which is absolutely sinless and the fallibility of the medium would make the mission itself liable to error).

Whether a Book (Kitab) is given him, or a scripture (Sahifa), or he is merely inspired through an angel; whether he is sent for the instruction of the whole world or for a limited section of it; it is clear to all sound reason that unless there is any such divinely commissioned person, the social, moral and spiritual organization of the human race can never be set right. Even from the lowest, *i. e.*, social standpoint, it is clear that, man being a social creature, when people of different kinds, differing in age, temperament, culture, morals, education, &c, live together, there will arise disputes in the various transactions of life, and for settling these, it is necessary to have a just ruler to decide in these affairs *strictly according to the pleasure of God*. Clearly for this last condition it is necessary that he should have superhuman sources of knowledge by inspiration. Everyone can see that where there is no such arrangement the management of the people is doomed to be extremely defective and unsatisfactory.



NOTE.—Every one can see the truth of this in the present highly developed forms of society and most efficient forms of Government. To say nothing of the radical faults (which cannot be removed either), to confine ourselves to limited individual interest, who does not see what happens in law-courts. The greater the control of law, the greater is the increase of crime, injustice and oppression. The closing of one hole leads to the opening of a hundred others, in which crimes like rats continue to breed unmolested, and feed upon the life and property of the helpless with every chance of immunity from danger. Such a wretched system is tolerable only because no better one can be invented. The greatest minds exert themselves to devise a Utopian System, but every improvement they make leads only to the creation of greater and subtler forms of vice and crime, and the world remains as doomed to misery as ever.

The conception of apostleship as a divine scheme of mundane government is ridiculed, but is it to be supposed that the Infinitely Wise and Benign God is quite indifferent to all this? Are these things mere trifles? That any system of government worked by purely human means can ever be perfect may well be despaired of *a priori*.

In short, such a divinely commissioned ruler of the world who might be able to rule exactly according to God's pleasure we call a prophet; and the desirability of such an arrangement is obvious from the above considerations.

Now the office of apostleship is purely a divine gift, it is not a kind of accomplishment to be attained to by suitable efforts. None can become a prophet by moral or spiritual exercise. For this it is necessary to be elected by God, and He in His Infinite Wisdom elects whom He considers fit for this exalted office. It need hardly be said that it is not for men to appoint anyone as

prophet over them. None having access to the hidden mental and spiritual conditions, their election can have no value.

Apostleship is a kind of general rulership granted by God to a particular man over mankind in all their moral and spiritual affairs. It extends to religious and temporal matters alike. It is the direct vicegerence of God on earth, so that he does not derive his authority through another man from God. This is said to distinguish it from Imamate which is a similar kind of general universal absolute rulership but derives its authority as successor of a Prophet.

The necessity of the office of apostleship appears all the more when we consider his higher, more spiritual functions. Morally and spiritually, we, fallen creatures, are very far off from the Holy God. So it is necessary to have a medium, who being only a man in form should be possessed of the greatest piety and highest purity of spirit, so that being affiliated on the one side with men, may be fit for affiliation with God on the other, so as to receive His commandments and convey them to the people, and thus, through him, as the golden link, the spiritual relation of man with God may be firm and strong. Since this object is extremely desirable, necessity of apostleship can hardly be questioned.

NOTE.—That the Prophet should be a man, the highest ideal man, appears from the simple consideration that he should be not merely the conveyer of commands from God, but also the model of their due observance, an example set up, which leaves no excuse for

others, not to approach as nearly as may be to that standard of perfection. Hence these apostles (prophets and Imams) are called Arguments of God, i. e., arguments justifying God in condemning those not approaching them in merit. It is not sufficient that God has duly communicated a set of commandments to mankind, it is necessary to show that they have been faithfully acted upon by some of their own fellow-beings. This is all the more important as the ideal taught in Islamic teachings is that of perfection in all human capacities, mental, moral, spiritual, physical, everything, and as such, the realization of the whole ideal in any one individual may well be despaired of. The prophet shows in his life that it is not impossible of attainment, only if one wishes piously to act up to it. It is this all-embracing nature of Islamic ideal seeking to develop man in all possible capacities that characterises this religion and marks its superiority over all religions which, as a rule, aim at the development of some one side at the expense of the others.

*Functions and duties of a prophet as a legislator or teacher of divine law.*—These may be summarised as follows:—

(1) To teach the good or evil of things which reason or common sense is not ordinarily able to discover or decide upon definitely.

(2) Where reason is able to give a correct verdict, to confirm this. (This may sometimes be necessary, since owing to the perversion of the moral sentiment some obvious crimes have been held to be legal and even virtuous; witness the meritoriousness once believed of self-immolation of wives on the funeral pyres of husbands. Modern civilization also affords many instances. Nudity is not blameable with Japanese, dancing with another man's

wife among Europeans. These instances may well raise a doubt about the validity of our own moral judgments, however correct they may be. When they receive confirmation from revelation, the conviction is strengthened. Tr.)

(3) Actions which are sometimes good and sometimes vicious—to teach their appropriate situations and circumstances.

(4) To make a discrimination of things generally hurtful from those generally beneficial or indifferent.

(5) To teach right methods of and frame suitable regulations about the various transactions of life and government of the family, town and country.

(6) To assist in the development of the community according to their capacity.

(7) To teach right morals and prevent people from bad courses. To chastise them and ordain chastisements for the future.

(8) To teach the spiritual reward or punishment in the next life for virtues and vices.

(9) To make a complete code of these things. This is collectively known as Shari'at or religious law.

*Infallibility and other requisites for a prophet.*

It is necessary that the prophet should be infallible, sinless (*i. e.*, free from all sins), incapable of anything evil, *in spite of the moral liberty he shares with other fellow men.*



The necessity of his being infallible is easily apparent. If he is not infallible, it will be possible for him to tell lies, and in this case no credit can be given to what he declares as divine commands. Again it is incumbent on the people to follow the prophet in everything. If he is a sinner it becomes a duty to follow him in his sin as well, which is absurd, the duty rather being to oppose it. Thirdly, a sinner naturally ceases to be revered. Without reverence and prestige his mission entirely fails; nobody will listen to him.

Thus it appears that the prophet should be such a man that in his moral perfection he is incapable of doing anything sinful. Not only mortal sins, but venial ones also are impossible for him. Neither knowingly nor in forgetfulness; neither after his appointment to this office nor before it; neither in matters relating to his mission nor in other private matters, is a prophet liable to sin or turpitude.

This is the fixed doctrine of the Shias based on the above considerations and also the general teachings of the Imams. Wherever in the Quran or the traditions there occur expressions apparently lending support to the contrary view, or any sin is imputed to a prophet (as in the story of Adam's fall), it must be understood that here it is not real sinfulness that is meant; the expression is allegorical or metaphorical, the real meaning being something quite different. In short, such expressions, whether occurring in the Quran or traditions, have to be interpreted consistently with this view.

NOTE.—It would lead far beyond the limits of this brochure to discuss the various oft-quoted examples. In a general way it may be observed that all commands are not of an obligatory nature so as to make their neglect sinful; most are merely advisory, their neglect is merely *Tarke aula* (omission of some optional virtue, which is not sin), the foregoing of something good personally or at best of something meritorious. But taking into consideration the high moral perfection expected of these holy men, these are taken by themselves in that light, and hence the constant prayers for pardon of sins—not that any real sin was committed, but that the relative lack of spiritual perfection was accounted as such. The same consideration explains the use of strong words in the Quran which are apt to be understood as implying real moral guilt.

Again, in the case of some passages there is pure misunderstanding. The prophet is the representative of the whole community of believers; as such he is addressed with imputations of sinfulness, while really it is not he but the people that are meant.

The arguments for the infallibility of prophets are perfectly just; but whatever may be thought of them, this at least must be admitted that the elect of God must be in all respects superior to those who are not so elected and in these too some, we are sure, are capable of attaining nearly to practical sinlessness. Moral infallibility is not so high and difficult a condition as is generally thought of. It requires a miraculous gift only when it implies other perfections than moral ones such as omniscience—to exclude unwitting sins. These gifts, in a measure at least, constitute the very nature of apostleship.

It is also necessary the prophet should be superior to all men of his age in all moral excellences such as knowledge, piety, generosity, valour, chastity, devotion, etc; for obedience to him and following him in every act and word is compulsory on all he is sent to. If these are

his superiors or equals this would be unmeaning preference which is irrational and vicious.

God has sent a large number of prophets, their number is stated to be one lac and twenty-four thousands. Many of these were mere prophets, inspired for his own benefit.

To some the divine commandments were given in visions ; others heard the angels, but did not see them ; others saw them too. To some commandments only were given, some got scriptures (Sahifas), others books (Kitabs). The Books are four in number : (1) Taurat (supposed to be the Pentateuch) given to Moses ; (2) Zabur (supposed to be the P-salms) given to David ; (3) Injil (supposed to be the Gospel) given to Jesus ; (4) Quran, given to the last prophet Mohammad.

Some were sent for specific localities, some for particular countries. Some for a limited space of time, others for ever to the day of judgment. Some are designated as great prophets. These are Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Mohammad.

The law of every prophet was meant to continue in force for a limited period, but the law of our Prophet is much more perfect (being suited to the modern civilization) than those of the preceding ones, and so will hold for ever. It has cancelled all previous legislatures. The world is so advanced that there is no need of any more prophets, hence our prophet is the last one, or the 'Seal.'

There have been six such Codes of law. One started by Adam and the remaining five by the five Exalted prophets. The Law of our Prophet is not limited to any locality, country, nor to any time-limit. It is for the whole world to the day of judgment. The code is so perfect and comprehensive as to be equal to the needs of all ages.

*Miracle.*—According to the needs of the ages, and in order to complete the evidence of the reality of their divine mission, God granted to each of the prophets certain miracles which served to establish their claim beyond any possibility of doubt.

To distinguish it from other wonders, a miracle has been defined as the doing of something not possible to man in the ordinary course of nature—and that after making a claim to this high spiritual office and seeking to make it evidence of the same. Thus Moses' rod became a serpent, or for him the Red Sea was split up into patches of water. Our Lord Jesus Christ used to revive the dead. To our Prophet was granted the Quran, none being able to produce a composition like to it. Besides these famous ones, a thousand other miracles were shown from time to time by the prophets.

It should be understood that the power of showing miracles relates to things only physically impossible. It does not mean the power to do what is really, that is rationally or logically, impossible. The latter is *per se* impossible, it cannot happen at all.



Wonders apparently similar to some of the miracles can also be shown by what is called sorcery, fascination, juggling and other arts. These, too, appear to be next to impossible, in the ordinary course of nature. But those acquainted with these arts know how these things may be accomplished, can show similar feats of wonder themselves, and can also counteract them and their effects. A miracle however is that which is effected without the exercise of art learnt by instruction. Again it is such that no one besides is able to do the same or exhibit a similar wonder *on challenge*.

NOTE :—It is believed that in such cases the power of sorcery, or whatever it is, will be wrested away, and no wonder approaching the miracle in appearance will be able to be shown, or in some other way the trick will be exposed. This, of course, if the miracle is of a nature that can be imitated by these arts. Most miracles however are not capable of imitation, as we will see later. The most satisfactory test for the distinction, however, is the life of the miracle-worker. If the life of the prophet is fully known, as in the case of our own prophet, it can be easily seen whether he has had access to, or devoted his time in learning the black arts. Hence also the utility of the *debut* of the prophet in his own people who know him best. Appeal has been made to this in the Quran (10-18.)

Another distinction between miracle and sorcery is that the latter cannot be effective on heavenly bodies, while a miracle can. (Witness the splitting of the moon for the Prophet or the wonders on the day of Karbala. Tr.)

Again the fascinator is usually destitute of learning, wisdom, good sense and good morals, and like the man of the street, is a careless fellow. The real miracle-

worker, on the other hand, is learned, virtuous, and commands respect.

NOTE:—This is a true and very important test. For ought we know of spiritualism, the development of these dark powers produces a tremendous strain on the mind, so that the man gets all the intellectual powers and moral capacity seriously impaired and he ever leads a more or less crazy life. The prophet, on the other hand—witness our own Prophet, in spite of his great spiritual powers, as shown in his miracles, is acknowledged to be the greatest intellectual genius ever born—at once a philosopher, a saint, a warrior, a statesman: the founder of a religion and an Empire. In short, a close study of the life of the prophet is of inestimable value in determining the worth of his miracles.

Once more, the miracles shown by the prophets were only impossible in the ordinary course of nature, not really impossible. Those who deny the possibility of a miracle do not understand the question properly and do not differentiate between physical and rational impossibility. They are also deceived by a misinterpretation of the words of God in the Quran. “Thou dost not find any change in God’s course.” From this they infer that the laws of nature are immutable. The meaning of the verse, however, is not that God Himself cannot change it, it only means that no other has power to change it. Else God would have to be held as powerless.

NOTE.—Tyndall has well said “To deny the possibility of a miracle is as absurd as speculative atheism.”

Our prophet, Mohammad son of Abdullah son of Abdul Muttalib son of Hashim son of Abde Manaf, is the last and greatest of the prophets. No prophet is to arise any more to the day of judgment; whoever claims to be such is to be considered an impostor.

NOTE.—It may be well to understand the reason of this finality. First, as has already been noticed in a previous note, the ideal of a perfect religion is already realised in Islam. The object of religion is the perfection of man in all capacities and in all relations. The teachings of Islam provide for this fully. The ideal of previous religions stopped short with development in particular capacities. Higher Hinduism is wholly engrossed with the spiritual side and ignores the moral and material aspects altogether. Christianity attends exclusively to morals and leaves the intellectual and material side untouched (if I may say so, for it really has nothing but contempt for these). To the Jews their law and their nationality is everything. Islam is above all such narrowness and onesidedness. Its ideal is perfect perfection in everything and there is nothing beneath its notice. Thus a more perfect religion cannot be conceived even. Then the Prophet created a community and put it under divine guidance for over 200 years, till it was secured that the religion was neither capable of extinction, nor of corruption in any essential matter, as has been the case with former religions. This living, immortal community is sufficient to keep up the work of guidance for all time, and for cases of exceptional difficulty, it must be remembered that the Vicegerent of the Prophet still lives and will continue to live and is expected to make his *debut* when the conditions are hopelessly depraved. Thus the sending of another prophet would be simply superfluous.

*Evidences for our Prophet.*—The truth of the apostleship of our Prophet is proved in the same way as that of the other prophets. He claimed apostleship and supported his claim by miracles that baffled all intellect. The previous prophets had predicted of his appearance. Volumes have been devoted to these. If we were to enter into detail of these things, the little book would swell to an inordinate size. The greatest miracle is the Quran—his

standing miracle. He was born on 17th Rabia I year 52 before Hijra; at the age of 40 was commissioned with apostleship on 27th Rajab, and died on 28th Safar A. H. 11, at the age of sixty-three, enjoining his followers to stick fast to the Book of God and his own family for guidance. "I am leaving," said he, "two great things among you, the Book of God and my own family. So long as you keep yourselves attached to these, you will never be misguided after me; and these two will never separate till they come back to me at the Pond in Heaven."

NOTE.—Certainly a discussion of the many and multifarious set of evidences for the divine mission of Our Lord the Prophet is out of question in a small brochure like this. Much less can it be attempted in the brief notes I undertake to append, and this is all the more unfortunate as the main strength of Islam lies in these evidences. They are far more numerous, and immeasurably stronger in the case of our Prophet than any other. We can afford only to indicate the main lines of evidence for the enquirer. For the prophecies relating to the Prophet in the Old Scriptures, the best authority is the *Anisul Aalam* of Fakhru'l Islam, a learned Christian divine converted to Islam. Many of these prophecies are discussed by Godfrey Higgins whose arguments are largely drawn upon in the *Kanzul Marifat* of Amjad Ali Khan, a translation of which is in the press. Some, like all old prophecies, require comment to understand and appreciate their application. Others like Duet. 18:15, Genesis 49:10 Deut. 33:2 read with Genesis 21:20; John 14. 15—17, *Ibid.* 15. 25—27. *Ibid.* 16:7—15 are clear and admit of no other interpretation. Later researches have added more. Syed Hamza Ali of Amroha has given a very ingenious interpretation of Chap. 12 of the Revelation, the substantial accuracy of which is beyond question. My own explanation of the appointment of the 10th of Tisri as a day of mourning seems also very clear and unexceptionable.



Of the miracles we may leave out of account the numerous physical miracles, which cannot be witnessed now. Some, from the evidential point of view, are permanent and lasting. Of these prophesies may be considered first. These are not vague poetical expressions, like the Old Testament ones, but clear, precise predictions of specific events duly fulfilled in later history. Of these those fulfilled after being recorded in extant books are the most valuable for us. There are many such collected and ably dealt with by my father in his *Mazhabe Aql* and other works. We may refer to the numerous ones quoted by Rashidi in his History about the rise of the Turks and their devastation; or witness the foretold number of Abbaside Caliphs in the tradition quoted by Gazzali long before the dynasty came to an end. The prediction about the Fire of Hedjaz, due to appearance of a mud volcano, is too well known to need description. But of those fulfilled before their record in extant books, there are certainly not a few that are equally certain. The famous prediction about the victory of Greeks over Persians and that about the rise of the hated Omyeds to Caliphate are given in the Quran. That about the death of Ammar, son of Vasir fighting against a rebellious host was so well known as to cause agitation when it was fulfilled. And be it remembered, all these are clear, precisely expressed, predictions, not vague, interpreted ones.

Then there is another order of miracles, which have never been claimed for, at least never vindicated in the case of any of the older prophets. Every advance in science is so much evidence of the super-human knowledge or miraculous intellectual powers of the Prophet and the Imams. The subject has been fully discussed in my Science and Islamic Tradition. Here again it is the scientific verification of clear, precise statements, not liable to other interpretation, that counts, and such, it is hopeless to look for anywhere else. Owing to historical reasons there is a preponderance of such miracles in the traditions of the Imams than of the Prophet himself, yet limiting ourselves to the Quran only, we find clear

statements of the growth and decay and motion of mountains (Quran 27. 90), cracks in the earth (86. 12), sexes of plants (20. 55 ; 36. 36 ; 22. 5 ; 50. 5, &c.), three coats of uterus (39. 8), physical features of Japan (18. 89 with Qatadas' comment) shrinkage of the earth (13. 41), primitive spiral form of the solar system in nebulous stage (21. 104 with 41. 10), and many other scientific truths more or less clearly stated or expressed. Those of Imams, like the well-known saying of Ali about the antiquity of the Pyramids of Egypt, that Vega was in Cancer when the Pyramids were built, will be mentioned later.

The Quran is a miracle of Miracles. As a mere literary production it is simply miraculous. The subject is difficult and cannot be briefly touched upon. I have dealt with it in my essay on Quran as a standing miracle. One may, however, be sure what it was, when he knows that its effect was attributed to sorcery and the Arab infidels thought it very dangerous for its sound to come to their ears. And this, in spite of the fact that it has none of the arts by which poets embellish their composition, on the other hand teems with apparent literary faults which seem to be inexcusable. Closer examination in the light of present advancement in literary taste, reveals the fact that it has literary beauties of a kind which Arab poets have no conception of even to this day. They are appreciated and striven to be brought in only by the greatest poets of the West, and the apparently inexcusable literary defects (where not due to the mutilation incident to its method of collection) are, as such, beauties of the highest order. Besides, the Quran has a profusion of truths of science, psychology and spiritual philosophy which is simply wonderful for the age it was given in and the man it was given to.

Are these not sufficient, even if we take no account of the very numerous physical miracles that are recorded of the Prophet in the histories ? The splitting of the moon is mentioned in the Quran in a way that does not admit of its being interpreted otherwise. And, be it remembered, whatever is mentioned in the Quran about the Prophet's life or time must be held to be beyond question ; all eyes were upon

the Prophet and any lie or exaggeration would certainly have raised a storm of invective against him.

And all this is only part of the evidence for Islam and for the Prophet. To the Prophet's own miracles must be added those of the Imams after him. Thus the number of striking prophecies duly fulfilled is largely increased, and so also the testimony of science to the truth of traditions is increased to an immense extent. There is not only an indefinite increase in the number of past physical miracles, but there are added a large number of lasting, periodical and recurring miracles, scattered all over the world at the present day. Certainly, it can hardly be said that for any prophet there was ever such a mass of solid evidence as exists for our Prophet to-day. Many have left so little behind them that their very existence is doubted by historians. The testimony our Prophet has borne to them is the only evidence we have for believing in them.

Above all the life and history of the Prophet is a miracle in itself. A whole nation grovelling in the lowest depths of idolatry, steeped in the most depraved conditions of morality, raised up in a few years (however imperfectly) by the genius and efforts of a single, unlettered man to a high spiritual form of religion and morals, and afterwards evolved to perfection in it by the same man's design and arrangement.—Is this not veritably a miracle unparalleled in the history of the world?

*General Remarks.*—(Nominal Christians of the present day are beginning to submit to the calumnies of the Jews about Our Lord Jesus Christ, as generally people do not recognise that a prophet ought to have good social status and lineage. Hence it is necessary to point out that—Tr.) It is necessary, according to the Shias, that a prophet should be of pure birth, should be free from abhorrent diseases and other such features. His parents and ancestors should not be of low birth and low occupation; mothers should be chaste.

The Shias hold that not only the Prophet himself from his birth, but all his ancestors were unitarians and held to (the essentials of—Tr.) the true faith according to the creed of Abraham. Azar (Terah) was the uncle of Abraham, not his father. He is called so simply according to convention of the Arabs.

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## CHAPTER III.

### IMAMATE.

Imamate (office of the vicar of the prophet, like apostleship) is general command and authority over the whole world in matters both spiritual and temporal, but it is held as vicegerent or successor of the Prophet

After the death of the Prophet hot dissensions arose among the people about his successor, called by various names as vicegerent, Imam, heir or caliph. Some held that the Prophet had already completed the work of guidance, there was no need of a caliph. Some admitted the need of it, but held that it was not necessary for God or the Prophet to appoint such successor, and accordingly the Prophet did not do so; it was the business of the people, and it was open to them to elect any one they pleased by mutual consent and counsel. Besides this (at a later age) other methods of appointment were also held to be valid. A caliph could appoint a successor after him by his will and decree. Victory and subjugation was also recognised to be valid. Whoever got the best of the circumstances and became a ruler by force, his caliphate is valid. And so forth.



One sect, however, holds that Caliphate can be valid only by appointment made by God or (His deputy on earth) the prophet. None has a right and power to elect and appoint a Caliph but God or his prophet. The community has no hand in the matter. This sect, holding Caliphate to be matter of the Prophet's decree and ordination is called the Shias. All other sects who do not hold such ordination necessary are classed as Sunnis.

The Shia point of view is that, just as during his lifetime the Prophet was the protector and sustainer of the divine faith and its law, it is necessary that such arrangement (for keeping up the faith alive and free from corruption, etc.), should continue for all time. For this purpose it is necessary that the vicegerent of the Prophet to whom the charge of faith is so entrusted should, like the Prophet, be superior to all creation in all moral and spiritual excellences—knowledge, intellect, piety, devotion, generosity, etc. It is only on this condition that his absolute qualified sovereignty over all—and in all matters, can be accepted. The argument for the superiority of the prophet applies here too with equal force. Similarly like the prophet he should be sinless and infallible, so that there may be perfect justification for trust in his carrying out his functions properly. Now infallibility and spiritual purity and perfection are not matters open to observation and so men have little capacity of knowing each other fully in these respects. Hence it is very necessary that the selection should be effected by One whose knowledge extends to the open and the secret alike. Thus even if the whole

community were really or one choice and appoint one really by mutual consent and agreement of all, even then the selection would not be worthy of trust and acceptance.

*The Sunni view of the Caliphate.*—The Sunni view is that Abubecker, son of Abu Qahafa, was the direct successor of the Prophet after his death. And it happened thus: As soon as the Prophet died and Ali (with other members of the Prophet's household) were busy in his funeral ceremonies, some persons, seizing the opportunity and considering the question of Caliphate to be much more momentous, left the funeral and assembled in the shed called Saqifa Bani Saeda to settle it among themselves. Disputes rose, but Omar stopped the wrangling by doing Bayat (a form of swearing fealty) to Abubecker. Some others followed the initiative and soon a good number acknowledged him to be Caliph; and a Caliph in reality he is believed to have become by this method. It is acknowledged that he was appointed Caliph neither by God nor by the Prophet, else there should have been no need to resort to this procedure. It is this method that they designate by the name of 'Ijmaa' or consensus of public opinion.

Now Abubecker, conceiving Omar to be fit for Caliphate, nominated him as such shortly before his death. Omar in his turn selected a few persons to decide and select some one among themselves. It was in this way that Othman, son of Affan called Zul Nurain (with two lights, having married two ladies reputed to be daughters of the prophet) was appointed. He made no arrangement for succession after him, it was his oversight, or rather he

got no opportunity for this, and so Ali'bin Ali Talib had to be made Caliph. These are the four pillars of Caliphate according to the Sunnis. Later, when attention was called to the tradition of the Prophet that there would be twelve Caliphs after him, all of them among the Quraish, this series was extended to include Moavyah and Yazid (who by the way caused almost the utter extirpation of the Prophet's family and generation, slaughtered the grandson of the Prophet with undescribable agonies, in extremities of hunger and thirst in the desert of Karbala). With such men as these was the number of twelve made up.

NOTE.—This rapid sketch is not to be regarded as a resumé of the facts of early Caliphate as understood or recognised by the Sunnis. As such, this crumbling of facts would be inexcusable, for (and this is very satisfactory that) there are no differences about the facts themselves, and they are crying. Here the author means merely to show how the various methods of attaining to Caliphate, now held valid by the Sunnis, were not derived from any regulations on the point dictated by the Prophet or even drawn up by the people themselves beforehand. They were formulated centuries later from precedents in the early history of Islam. Whatever was done is considered rightly done and provision is made for its validity in the law-books. The guiding principle is the unity of the State, however brought about or kept up; little attention is paid to the character of the Caliph, or of his government, or the right with which he holds the sceptre. However this loose and arbitrary Caliphate is given a halo of religious sanctity and it is thought a mortal sin to rebel against a Caliph, however wicked and tyrannous he may be. Abdullah'bn Omar was much at pains to prevent people from swerving their allegiance from Yezid

(Sahib Muslim). We have a clear instance here of making religion a hand-maid of temporal politics.

*The Shias' view of Caliphate.*—The Shias hold that by the command of God the prophet appointed Ali'bn Abi Talib his successor and on numerous occasions declared this under a variety of expressions, sometimes very precisely. Here are some of his sayings culled from authentic books of the Sunnis on which no word of comment is needed:—

“Ali is to me in the relation of Aaron to Moses, except that there is to be no prophet after me.” That is to say if there were to be a prophet it would be Ali.

“This is my cousin and heir.”

“Every prophet has an heir and successor. Mine is Ali.”

“Love of him is Faith and enmity to him is infidelity.”

“Ali is with Truth and Truth is with Ali, moves with him howsoever he moves.

“Ali is with Quran and Quran is with Ali.”

In the Mawaddatulqurba (the work of a great Sunni saint and divine) a tradition is quoted from Anas'bn Malik that the Prophet said :

“God elected me above all the prophets, and chose me to be a prophet and my cousin to be my heir; and with him He strengthened my arms as He strengthened the arms of Moses with his brother Aaron. And he is my



Caliph, and my minister, and if there were a prophet after me it would be Ali."

Such declarations continued from time to time in Ali's favour till, when returning to Medina from his last pilgrimage the Prophet reached Jahfa at the place known in history as Ghadeer Khum and the attendants were branching off in various directions to take their roads—here in the scorching heat of midday sun, the command of God came to the Prophet to proclaim the Caliphate of Ali that very moment and the following verse of the Quran was revealed to urge it :—

"O thou the apostle, convey what has been revealed to thee from thy God; and if thou dost not do so, thou hast not done thy mission and God will protect thee from the people."

The prophet alighted from his camel that very instant and had it proclaimed that all that were going should return and assemble. The acacia thorns were cleared, a pulpit was set up, piling up the litters of the camels. All were anxious to hear this new command of imperative urgency—they were doing their best to protect the feet from the scorching sand. The prophet rose to the pulpit taking up Ali by the hand. After a long and eloquent address he told them of the near approach of his end, asked them to bear witness to his due fulfilment of God's mission, due communication to them of God's commands. Then he took from them the affirmation that he was their Lord, master, ruler, which all of them did. After all this

prologue be declared in clear words : “ Know that whosoever Lord I am, this Ali also is his Lord.” Then he prayed and blessed Ali in the words : “ O Lord, love him who loves Ali, and hate him who hates Ali ” and the assemblage rose to rain congratulations on Our Lord Ali for this divine appointment, as is usual at installations.

Omar looked very much pleased and with most cheerful countenance said “ Congratulations to you, O son of Abu Talib, you have become master of myself as well as of all the faithful, men and women.” There was a tent pitched up where Ali was seated and by the command of the Prophet every believer came to him to pay his homage and salute him in the words, “ Peace to thee, O Commander of the Faithful.”

It is for this reason that Shias hold our Lord Ali to be Caliph of the Prophet by true divine appointment.

NOTE.—The author has not mentioned the equally famous story of Our Lord's ordination for Caliphate at the beginning of the Prophet's apostolic career when the nearest relations of the Prophet were asked to back him up in his mission and none responded but Our Lord Ali. This event too is described in numerous Sunni works of note such as Tafsire Baghawi, etc. The memorable installation at Ghadeer e Khum is mentioned in innumerable Sunni works of history and tradition and is one of the most famous events in the history of Islam.

It may well be wondered how in spite of so prominent an expression of the Prophet's wishes, the Caliphate could so smoothly pass into other hands. There is no difficulty, however, in understanding this for one who knows anything of the circumstances of those times.

Anyone who realises the inconceivably depraved, intellectual and moral condition of Arab society in the Prophet's day, and side by side

with it reflects on the intensely sublime and spiritual religion (as sketched in previous pages) that was sought to be implanted upon it, will have no difficulty in seeing that it was too high for them. Accordingly we find that in the ten years of the Prophet's mission at Mecca there were but a few converts to the new faith. In the next ten years of life at Medina, when the career was mainly military, the whole country was subjugated and cleared of idolatry. It is natural that on these millions of sudden converts Islam had no real hold; it was little more than a mere formula without any spirit of devotion and reverence or sense of religious responsibility.

Again these conversions were but rarely associated with that attachment, regard and reverence for the Prophet which we, in this age of civilisation, might consider natural. Hence the necessity of such precepts as these: "Raise not your voices above the voice of the prophet." (Quran 49.2), etc. One convert proposed to change wives with the Prophet, another to marry his wife after his death. Some suspected the Prophet of having stolen an article which was missing from the heaps of booty. One good man after long years of belief is said to have made a blind man make water in the Prophet's Mosque—simply to make a jest of the matter. This, of more or less true converts. A large number of professed converts were hypocrites who lay all sorts of plots against the life and mission of the prophet. The Medina Surahs of the Quran are full of their denunciation.

With such hostile elements, and with such low conception of devotion among adherents, what wonder that the wishes of the Prophet were neglected in a matter so tempting as wealth, liberty, and sovereignty? In the state of belief that actually existed, it was naturally intolerable to them that having attained to power through their own hands, the Prophet should claim absolute sovereignty over the expanding dominions for himself and his generation for ever and ever. It was not pleasant (it is not so still to many) to be assessed a tax of a fifth of all ordinary income to fill the pockets of the Prophet's family and genera-

tion. Indeed the new religion was not only too high, but too trying as well, for any but the most sincere and devout believers.

Then there were personal enmities to the Prophet and his family in the family animosities, such as with house of Omazeds, etc., who were very powerful. Their hearts were tingling with rancour at their subjugation and humiliation. And against Ali particularly, apart from natural grudge and envy, there was spirit of revenge burning in many hearts for the relations he had slain in battle. Anyone who knows anything of the proverbial spirit of revenge among the Arabs can understand how strong must have been the feeling against him among this vindictive people.

Thus the conditions were such that, for anything the Prophet could do, it was impossible that Ali could have attained to Caliphate. If he could have got it he should soon have lost it unless he stooped to base politic measures, [which of course were out of question for him. The few years of his own reign sufficiently show this. It was for this reason that while doing his best to declare his right, he never stirred himself to obtain it, otherwise it was not impossible that he should have had a measure of success, though at the expense of much bloodshed and at the risk of much ridicule on and apostacy from religion. It was these considerations, he always declared, that prevented him from enforcing his right.

According to numerous traditions there are eleven successors of the Prophet after Ali--all of his generation. Their names, too, are specified in certain traditions (which is, after all, not wonderful, as the number is certain and was notorious enough to be admitted by the Sunnis and to have aroused speculations in their church. Tr.) These are :—

- (1) *Ali'bn Abi Talib* [Martyred A. H. 40 by a blow of poisoned sword while in prayer. His valour, charity, knowledge and



devotion are equally famous in history; and his orations and prayers are masterpieces of Arabic Literature.]

- (2) *Hasan'bn Ali* [Poisoned A. H. 50 by Moavyah through one of his wives. Had abdicated the throne to Moavyah to secure peace with this result among others. His life shows that, do what one can, the enmity of the people of the time to the Prophet's household could never cease.]
- (3) *Husain'bn Ali* [Brutally slaughtered A. H. 61 with sons, brothers, kinsmen and followers in the extremity of thirst and hunger in the plains of Karbala—for not doing Bayat to Yezid.]
- (4) *Ali'bn Husain* [Poisoned A. H. 95. Famous for his intense devotion and hence surnamed Zaniul Abidin. His hymns are very famous. It may be said, no one who had such a life of intense and unjust misery could have retained such an intense love for, faith in, and devotion to God.]
- (5) *Mohammad'bn Ali* [Poisoned A. H. 116. Surnamed Baqir (ul Ilm) owing to the profusion of knowledge he displayed and dispersed.]
- (6) *Jafar 'bn Mohommad*, surnamed Sadiq. [Famous for his legislature and organization of the Shias. His famous epistle, quoted in Kafi, was a code of conduct for the Shias which the Shias read every morning and took promise from each other to follow. He organized missions for the propagation of Shia creed. Poisoned A. H. 148.]

Being a Regenerator of Shias, the sect is often called Jafaria after him.

- (7) *Musa'bn Jafar*, surnamed Kazim. [Famous for his devotion and mildness whence the surname. His long prayer of thankfulness, called Jowshane Saghir is well known. Was imprisoned by Harun-el-Raschid, and most of the period

of his Imamate, passed in dungeon with horrible tortures. Poisoned A. H. 183. His fetters were removed only after his death. The Sunni Iman Shafeii used to call his tomb 'the gate of the fulfilment of needs.']

- (8) *Ali'bn Musa* surnamed Riza. [Was compelled by Mamun to accept heir-apparentship of Caliphate after him, but this caused great sensation, and he was poisoned in his lifetime. Died A.H. 203.]
- (9) *Mohammad'bn Ali* surnamed Taqi or Jawad. [Poisoned A. H. 203 at the age of twenty-eight. His miracles and profusion of knowledge, confounding the greatest *savants* of the day, endeared him to Caliph Mamun who married a daughter of his to him. Poisoned by Caliph Motasim. His *Hirze jawad* is famous and is veritably a lasting miracle.]
- (10) *Ali'bn Mohammad* surnamed Naqi. [His discovery of Gegen-schien suffices to show his supernatural knowledge. His was a very hard time of persecution of the Shias. All his life passed in great danger, and he was subjected to extreme worry and humiliation by Mutawakkil. Poisoned A. H. 254.]
- (11) *Hasan'bn Ali*, called Askari. Famous for his knowledge and miracles, chiefly exposure of a Christian Saint causing rain to fall at will.
- (12) *Mohammad'bn Hasan*, the Mahdi—Our present Lord. Born A. H. 256. Disappeared A. H. 260.

Thus all these Imams (except our present Lord) suffered martyrdom at the hands of tyrannous enemies. Our Lords Ali and Husain met their end with sword, and the

other nine with poison. The 12th Imam lives to this day.

God in His wise providence has kept him hidden from men's eyes and he will appear when God thinks it opportune and desirable for him to do so.

It is an article of belief that the world can never be free for an instant from a living Argument of God, be he a prophet or Imam, living openly among men or concealed from view.

NOTE.—This is due to spiritual reasons imperfectly understood. The Imams and prophets have other functions also besides guidance—relating to the spiritual government and maintenance of order in the world.

All the Imams are sinless and infallible like the Prophet. The reasons and proofs for this in their case are the same as in the case of prophets.

It is an essential duty for every Muslim to know the Imam of his time. The tradition (of the Prophet) is "Whoever dies, not being aware of the Imam of his time, dies the death of ignorance" (*i. e.*, in error).

It is incumbent on every man to love, and acknowledge the spiritual lordship of the Holy Imams (as in the case of the prophet). The verse of the Quran "Say I do not ask any recompense except that ye love my family" is a clear witness to this. It is a part of faith for every true believer. No act of virtue or worship and devotion to God will be accepted without this, and on it depends salvation in the next life. Thus whoever does not

sincerely believe in their Imamate will never enter Heaven.

The Prophet and the Imams after him are Intercessors of the day of judgment (*i. e.*, they have the sanction of God to do so (Quran). They will intercede for the sinners among the faithful and thus procure salvation for them. On the day of judgment question will be made about the degree or measure of the love borne to them. Our Lady Fatima, the holy daughter of the Prophet, will also be an Intercessor. She too is free from all sins. The Prophet used to venerate her and used to say 'Whoever angered Fatima angered me; whoever angered me angered God (as it were); whoever angered God is (*ipso facto*) an infidel. She is the mother of eleven Imams.

The disappearance of the 12th Imam is an established fact, proved by traditions of both Shia and Sunni sects. He was born in the year 256 A. H. and is alive to the present day. For some time he remained visible, then God concealed him from view, yet some particular men were privileged to have access to his presence. This was the earlier or lesser disappearance, and continued for a short time only. Now is the age of greater complete disappearance.

NOTE.—Not that no one can see him these days; only it depends upon our Lord's pleasure to show himself whenever and to whomsoever he likes. The celebrated divine Mulla Husain Nuri has collected numerous authentic instances of persons who have been so favoured. But to prevent imposture on this point it is ordered that whoever claims this must be held to be a liar.



No definite time is fixed for his appearance ; knowledge of this is with God. He will appear when it seems desirable to God to make him do so. During this age of disappearance, his spiritual grace continues to act on all creation much as light and heat received from the sun screened behind a cloud. It is due to his blessings that creatures receive their maintenance, and on his existence depends the existence of Heaven and earth.

Many things are recorded in the traditions to occur as signs foreshadowing his appearance (some have been fulfilled too), some are to occur shortly before his time (and may have to be waited for). When he appears the world will be cleared of oppression and justice will prevail. To this period is given the name of *Rajaat, i. e., Return of the age of the Imams*. It would take us much beyond our limits to attempt a detailed account of this period.

Knowing God to be All-powerful, it is mere silliness to be incredulous about the length of his life (on purely physical reasons.) While there is nothing rationally impossible in this, hundreds of traditions teach that this is so. History bears record of many men who have had exceptionally long ages. According to religious traditions the continued existence of several persons as Jesus, Elias and Khizr is well-known. So is the long protracted existence of Satan. (Noah's age is, according to the Quran, nearly a thousand years or more, and so according to accounts in Genesis were the ages of many of the first

ancestors of men). It is therefore mere prejudice and ignorance that makes some people regard the doctrine as incredible. It is owing to this incredibility that some Sunnis hold that he will be born in the last age. They have nothing of value to support this assertion, perhaps they misunderstood some words in the traditions about the Mahdi. Thus it is perhaps through a misunderstanding that he is held by the Sunnis to be of the generation of Our Lord Hasan'bn Ali (2nd Imam). The fact is that he is the son of Hasan'bn Ali called Askari the 11th Imam. The unity of names perhaps deceived them in this.

The accounts of the age of his appearance are very interesting and revive the hearts of the faithful. But there is no space for them in this small pamphlet.

(They are well-known, however, and easily accessible. Tr.)

NOTE.—When some of the foreshadowing signs predicted have already been seen to be fulfilled, no reasonable doubt ought to remain about the truth of the main thing predicted. One of the most famous of these is the refilling of the Lake Sawa with water. This lake was once worshipped, and its waters were dried up at the time of the birth of the Prophet, whence it was regarded as one of the prodigies of the event. The refilling commenced in the first year of Nasiruddin Shah's reign and excited great interest. This and others are described in my father's *Mazhabe Aql*. More significant are the astronomical peculiarities of the age, such as inordinate lengthening of days, change of dates of eclipses. We are beginning to see signs of

these. They are fully discussed in my Science and Islamic Tradition, and are also described in my father's work.

It may be said that moral degeneration is improbable ; it is hard to conceive that some social catastrophe will turn us into beasts again. This, however, it is not necessary to assume, purely secular progress has an essential tendency to produce a moral degeneration of a very subtle kind, which cannot be briefly explained in a note. Readers would do well to read Ruskin's *Seasame and Lilies* to convince themselves of the reality of this.

To be brief, it is these very Imams that are (referred to in the Quran and traditions under various appellations, such as, Ahle Bait (people of the house), Itrat (progeny) Zavil Qurba (relations) of the prophet, (with high spiritual excellences declared for them and great exhortations for the people to cling fast to them). It is these holy souls whose spiritual essence (light, as it is called, in the traditions) is the same with that of the Prophet. All were created out of the same one Light. It is these alone whose absolution from sin is mentioned in verse of the Quran. It is these who are likened to Noah's ark (none not entering it being saved.) It is these whose command is the command of the Prophet, whose prohibition is the same as that of the Prophet, whose love and obedience, or neglect and opposition are in no way different from those of the Prophet. So it behoves every sensible man to cling fast to them, and never be off from their obedience. Their word and deed must be followed with scrupulous attention. He should side with those who follow them, and be aloof from those that oppose them be they Sahabies or Tabeies. This is the true test of real devotion and attachment ; else,

so obvious are the moral and spiritual excellences of these Imams, that few dare openly to avow their rejection of and opposition to them. Who can believe that men who cannot bear to hear their excellences, casting aside their teachings, follow the sayings of others, take their enemies and oppressors to be fathers of their church and yet affirm that they are dutifully attached to the prophet's house, [know their minds clearly, or] express their feelings with truth? How can it be believed that men who do not know, even the names of these Imams, do not like to hear them mentioned by side of those they are attached to, are truly friends?

Of all the Musalmans, it is only the Shias who desire to follow the sons of the Prophet in all matters of life and soul. From the doctrines of faith, down to the most trivial affairs and transactions of life, they regard it a duty to follow their teachings and practice. Even in matters relating to health and sickness, they try to follow their methods. In matters of discipline, prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, etc., all is derived exclusively from them. It is their traditions alone that they follow and it is through them alone that they hope and aspire to reach the Prophet of God. Accordingly it is their sayings and traditions that fill their books. They rejoice in their happiness and grieve in their tribulation. They make festivals of gladness on the days of their nativity, and mourn and lament on the anniversaries of their death. By their acts they prove their spirit of loyalty to the



Imams, and believe it for certain that it is in this that the pleasure of God and His Prophet consists. In short to them loyal devotion to the Prophet's house is the most important essential of faith. As our Lord Baqir has said : "Islam has five bases, prayer, fasting, Zakat (alms), Hajj (pilgrimage), and devotion to the prophet's house. Nothing is so much insisted upon as the last, but the people, while taking up the first four, have cast devotion aside." In another tradition he says : "Know that even if a man wakes up in prayer all night, and keeps fast all days of his life, gives away all his substance in charity, and undertakes journey every year for pilgrimage—all the same, not knowing the Imam and not having devout attachment to him, so that all his actions be strictly in accordance with his directions, he will have no claim on God, nor will he be counted among the faithful, for all his piety and devotion."

*Tawalla and Tabarra.*—Tawalla means obedience, following, love, and devotion. Tabarra is dislike, hatred, severance, and opposition. It is necessary for every man of true faith to have Tawalla for the Prophet's family and its opposite for their enemies.

Laanat, accursing or wishing the curse of God to fall on, is allowable for every enemy of God, prophet or the Imams, whether this is done generally or with specification of name. God has himself cursed in several places in the Quran, and mentioned people who curse along with Himself in approbation, "These are the men whom God curses and also those who curse."

*Conclusion.*—It is essential for every convert to Islam to decide whether the successor appointed by God and His prophet is fit to be followed and obeyed, or one set up by the people. If it is not possible for him to examine critically the worth and authenticity of the various traditions of the two sects, he can and should consider how many and of what degree or nature are the excellences said to be affirmed by Prophet in the case of Abu Bakar as compared with those (mostly received by either sect) in the case of our Lord Ali. He should also see in which of the two alleged successors are the intellectual and moral perfections and spiritual excellences of the Prophet to be found, according to the common consent of the learned *savants* of either sect. (These simple considerations suffice to make him arrive at the truth. It is a great error to suppose that the Shias are partisans of Ali because of his close relationship to the Prophet. They set no value to these things, any more than to companionship so constantly harped upon by the Sunnis. It is only mental, moral and spiritual excellences that constitute the claim in favour of our Lord Ali. And, be it remembered, it is not merely in interest of temporal caliphate that the Shias continue their struggle for. This part is not omitted merely because it was so essential for sustaining and furthering the work of the Prophet. Also remember, no side of human life is too insignificant for scope of a perfect religion. Tr.)

Also the fact of the Sahabas foregoing the funeral of the Prophet and their activities at the time at the

shed of Bani Saida will help them to see (and it is essential they should see) which class of persons had the greater reverence for the Prophet, and this will suffice to come to a conclusion about spiritual perfection. It is hoped that comparing all these features of character with the great spiritual elevation of Ali'bn Abi Talib there will be no difficulty in recognising truth from error.

Ibn Abbas relates that the Prophet of God said "None will enter heaven unless he has a passport for it given by Ali, son of Abu Talib." Another of the Prophet's sayings is, "Whoever is friend of Ali is my friend, whoever is his enemy is my enemy," another that "If all creation were to unite on the love of Ali'bn Abi Talib, God would not have created Hell at all."

Not to quote specific traditions, Ali is the Standard-bearer of the Prophet, the Gate of the City of His knowledge, the Dispenser of the Pond of Heaven (Kausar), the Master over the hair-breadth, bladelike path to Heaven, the Apportioner of Heaven and Hell. He and the Prophet are of one Light, one Tree. He is the self of the Prophet.

*Supplementary Note.*—It should not be supposed that all the spiritual exaltation, we claim for the Imams, is a mere dogma based on traditions of the Prophet. The evidence for their mental, moral, and spiritual greatness is as direct, cogent, and extensive as that for the prophet himself. Even if the Prophet had never existed, this evidence would have justified belief in their apostleship or Imamate, whichever they claimed. It is not any way short of, or distinct from that for the Prophet. The world is literally full of their miracles, Take for

instance the new class of miracles peculiar to Islam, miracles of knowledge, anticipations of scientific truths which it was impossible for them to have even guessed at. My studies on the scientific traditions of Islam establish quite an inordinate number of them without a possibility of doubt. Thus to mention only a few of them, the traditions of our Lord Ali show an accurate knowledge of the exact dimensions of the sun, the fact of planets being attended with satellites, planets being controlled by the sun, the intertwining of galaxies, change of colours of stars, motions of the earth, variability of the Pole-star, ears of insects, bowing of plants in morning and evening, the peculiar rain-producing trees. Our Lord Hasan correctly calculated the Muslim date corresponding to the day of the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord Zainul Abidin gave first clear indication that air has weight, and, what is, much more remarkable discovery, the fact of light having weight or mechanical pressure. He also seems to have known that Mizar is a binary star, our Lord Mohammad Baqar seems to have known the gradual lengthening of days and the increasing eccentricity of Moon's orbit. Our Lord Jafere Sadiq gives a clear account of the apparent stationary condition of the sun in the morning due to refraction of its rays. One of his traditions gives the inclinations of the planes of some planetary orbits with fair accuracy, and it is reasonable to credit him with a knowledge of the planet Neptune and the invariable plane of the Solar system. Our Lord Riza allegorises Langley's theory that the sun is a blue orb. Above all is our Lord Naqi's very precise statement of the appearance of Gegenschien every midnight—a fact discovered only in the latter half of the 19th century, and established in the 20th. Conceive, if you can, all this knowledge of truths, so lately discovered and requiring so much scientific study and equipment to discover, with men living more than a thousand years ago—and that too, among a people grovelling in the lowest depths of culture and civilization. The subject has been discussed at length in my Science and Islamic Tradition. As philosophers it is not too much to say that all that Islam can boast of in the matter of purity of monotheism,



all its absolution of anthropomorphism and anthropomorphuism, in short all the metaphysical acumen it displays in its sublime conception of God is due, wholly and solely, to the teachings of these Imams.

Of their gift of prophecy, some idea can be formed from the fact that my father has collected more than 200 fulfilled prophecies of our Lord Ali alone, chiefly from Sunni sources. The greater number, it is true, were fulfilled before their record in extant works but many were fulfilled after record. Many, though most improbable, continue to be fulfilled to this day. These are best to be studied in my father's *Kitab-ul-kashfi anil Gasasah*. Predictions about rise of Fatimite Caliphs, about the Invasion of Halaku Khan, about the devastation of Sahibulzanj, and those about the Ali-Allahis, the Qaramites, the Safawi monarchs, the drowning of Basra, the rise of the Babi sect, the continuance of Kharijites, and so forth are very famous. All these were fulfilled after they were recorded. But as in the case of the Prophet, many of those fulfilled before record are equally certain—too famous to be omitted. Instance the precise number of those killed in battle of Nahrwan, etc. Two of his disciples, Raschide Hujri and Meesame Tammar, were charged with pretending to be prophets, owing to their constantly foretelling future events; so much, though relating to one Imam only, ought to suffice for this rapid review.

As in the case of the Prophet we omit to consider physical miracles which cannot be witnessed. But it is well known that the tombs of the Imams, and the very numerous places associated with their name, and things like Tazias set up to commemorate their history, are from time to time distinguished with miracles of a most marked character. Some are recurring, so as to be witnessed and examined every year, as walking in an arena of hot cinders near Hyderabad, which anybody can do with impunity when the sacred Alam is over it. It has been witnessed and notices published of it by Europeans. There are quite a number of such miracles, leaving no doubt about them.

The memorable slaughter of Karbala is a miracle of miracles. It is easier to read of than to conceive the events. It is hopeless to be

able to conceive the state of persons suffering from thirst for four days in the plains of Arabia; but any who can so exert their imagination, or study works on physiology, can see it was simply impossible for them to fight in this state, in the way they did. Accounts of the heroism of the martyrs fill every history of the event. The handful of followers kept on the fight so bravely that Yezid's general found himself obliged to take away his promise of single fight and attacked Husain and some other martyrs with whole hosts charging all at once. Again, boys like Qasim, who should never have seen fighting, never known how to use swords, did wonders in the battlefield. Is all this anything short of miraculous? Was there ever a more prominent instance of the spirit having complete control and absolute power over the flesh?

Again consider, put to every sort of disappointment at the hands of an ungrateful people, suffering the greatest indignities in life, living in constant fear of life and honour, with the malignant eyes of the worst tyrants always upon them, always forced to take the greatest precautions to keep their heads on their shoulders, some living for the most part of their lives in dungeons, with their kinsmen brutally murdered or walled up alive or flying for life all over the world seeking protection and finding it not—one should wonder, if a wholly innocent people, so treated for two centuries or more, should not have turned mad, or should have retained the slightest faith or trust in God. But for the divine spark in him, a man put to such atrocities and indignities as our Lord Zainul Abidin ought to have become an infidel. But what on the contrary do we find? A life of constant prayer and devotion, as truly unimaginable to us as the troubles and hardships they passed their days in. Their long, lengthy prayers or rather soliloquies to God, the sole solace of their lives, volumes of which have been collected, are living testimony to the depth and intensity of their devotion and realization of God's presence—so deplorably wanting in us. No wonder, these prayers have the wonderful power which characterise them—the power to produce spirit of devotion in hearts not prepared for it. There is nothing comparable to them in other religions. Yet

this devotion was not one of passive, weak natures. They were the greatest statesmen (if I may use the word) ever born. Of the martyrdom of Husain, it is well-known that it was one of the greatest acts of statesmanship ever done. This one act revived Islam after it had almost ceased to exist, and infused into it, a breath of spiritual life that can never pass away. (See my Husain in the Philosophy of History and Essay on "Husain aur Rabbani Siyasat.") And so of the other Imams, placed in the most distressing conditions, and subjected to the most horrible persecution, they did not despair and constantly kept on the work of nation-building, so that by the time of our Lord's disappearance, not only there was a large community of highly spiritual true believers, that they could never be extinct, but the true spiritual teachings of Islam got such a firm footing in the popular religion as well, that it was easy work to reform it by purely intellectual means. No such sacrifices as Husain and the other Imams did remained to be required.

Thus, as in the case of the Prophet, the lives of the Imams rightly reflected upon, would be seen to be veritable miracles in history. Of the miracles of the Imams I would particularly invite attention to two, always before our eyes, yet not duly appreciated. One is the mourning over our Lord Husain. I have shown in my Husain in the Philosophy of History and other essays, that it subverts the most elementary principles of Psychology. The other is divination by *Istikharah*. There are few Shias that do not witness a hundred miracles of this every year of their lives.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### RESURRECTION.

The last essential article of belief among Musalmans is the reality of the Resurrection. It means that God will raise up all men and genii after death on the day of judgment, and after duly weighing (their faith and

actions), will award them reward or punishment. Some will be sent to enjoy the bliss of Paradise and some will be consigned to the fires of Hell.

The moral argument for Resurrection may be briefly stated as follows : God has created nothing in vain and without some purpose. Such action would be beneath the dignity of an All-wise God. Surely, therefore, creation has some legitimate purpose. Also, since God is independent, it is equally clear that the purpose is such that the benefit of it does not accrue to God Himself. Clearly, therefore, it is the good of his creatures themselves.

Now does this purpose or good pertain to this worldly life alone, or does it extend to after-life? The former being unstable and transitory, it cannot be supposed that the purpose of an All-wise God is something so unlasting. Thus it is clear that the design is to grant eternal life and bliss in Heaven. For this, raising from the dead is necessary so that the virtuous may have full reward of their virtues, and the wicked may be punished for their sins.

NOTE.—Virtue is acting according to the design of creation. Vice is acting contrary to it. The former is thus the analogue of health and the latter of disease. If the former is attended with happiness in a perfect system of adjustment, the latter must be attended with pain. Hence Heaven and Hell are correlates and neither can be dispensed with in a physical view of things. It is erroneous to suppose, as some do, that the sole object of punishment is correction. As has been well said by Hegel the right view of punishment is that “it is the other half of crime,” which it is wrong not to administer, whether any good comes out of it or not.



As to the main argument which may seem strange to those used only to physical, matter-of-fact reasonings, it can only be observed that its force can be felt only by those who are convinced of the infinite moral perfection of God, in view of which every aspiration, if just and reasonable, creates a sort of claim on the Infinite goodness of God, and produces a moral conviction of its fulfilment. Philosophers like Kant who do not realise this sufficiently, stop at making immortality a postulate of practical reason. We have an additional ground for holding it to be certain.

The fact of life or persistence of conscious personality after death is proved by recent psychical research. See Sir Oliver Lodge's "Survival of Man," Myer's "Human Personality" and other works.

Whatever arguments are adduced against Resurrection are all based on ignorance. Thus it is said that what has become non-existent cannot be brought back into existence again. Hence resurrection is absurd. To this some thinkers have replied that resurrection does not mean this, but only the bringing together of the elementary parts into which a body has once decomposed and the uniting of the same in the shape that was formerly held. This is certainly not impossible. Again the maxim, thus appealed to, only declares that a thing, once existent, when passed out of existence, cannot afterwards be made existent again in a way that the first and last existences may be held to be one, and all specific peculiarities of the first may continue unimpaired in the second. With these specifications we also may admit this maxim. But such is not our view of Resurrection. Our belief is that those living sometime, having died by the command of God, will be revived and given an existence (material

body, etc.), similar to the first, but it is not necessary to have all essential features of their previous life. There is no transformation of one into the other. Moreover, the God who first imparted existence to it out of nothingness is certainly able to reverse the nothingness that has again covered it and clothe it with existence again.

NOTE.—I must say that I know nothing of this maxim and so am not able to appreciate the force of the objection. The discussion is quite a jargon to me.

Some say that belief in Resurrection is not necessary. Reward and punishment are possible in this very world, and taking this standpoint they have designed a system of transmigration of souls and believe in it. According to this view the soul leaving one body personates another and in this new life reaps the consequences of its past actions; rather the rebirth in the new form is itself a reward or punishment. But we have seen that it does not suit the dignity of an All-wise God to award merely temporal and transitory reward or punishment. For the world is not a place of happiness; everyone, from the humblest beggar to the greatest monarch, strives hard to be relieved of the cares and worries of the world, but gets it not. If in one respect he is happy, a hundred troubles of other kinds seize him. If such is indeed the reward to be given by the Almighty, we should say it is nothing.

Moreover, if the man is to be rewarded or punished in this world, why not all in the first life immediately?

after the sin is committed? Why wait for death and the receiving of another body? When it is admitted that another life is required for meting out justice (life as known in the world being insufficient), why not admit eternal life of the Hereafter? Why make this world an eternal round for the circulation of spirits?

NOTE.—It may be noted that the above discussion is not meant to be a refutation of the doctrine of transmigration. It is only meant to show that it does not involve a high conception of the Almighty God, and nor shall we discuss it here. It may be noted, however, that the problem of inequalities in the world, which it was formulated to explain, involves a radical error about the constitution of the world. As Mr. H. L. Halder says, "it takes all sorts of things to make a world"; it is impossible that there should be no inequalities. We are parts of a system, and have no right to ask why we were born in this and that capacity or state, any more than, as in the old story, the belly had a right to be dissatisfied why it was not head or heart. What we have to see is that in whatever status and condition we have to live, we do our duties and functions properly.

Those fond of arguing upon it with an air of philosophy may well be told that we know too little of soul or spirit to be able to reason out conclusions from them. When ideas are vague and indefinite anything may be shown to be possible or impossible.

As regards details of future life, it may be said that a general indefinite belief about such things as the questioning of angels (Munkir and Nakir) in the grave, weighing of actions, the Bridge called Sirat, accounts of actions, etc., is sufficient. Since in the Quran and traditions those things are mentioned definitely, and they are logically possible too, so a general assent to them is necessary.

The doctrine of the intercession of the Prophet and the Imams for the sinners—nay even the intercession of Shia divines (to a limited degree) is true. Heaven and Hell have been created and exist to-day. In the former we have Tuba (a large tree overshadowing all heavens), Kausar (a pond), Salsabil (a fountain), Howries, Gilmans, etc. In short such blessing as eyes have never seen, ears never heard, nor hearts ever conceived. In the Hell are Hamim (molten matter), Ghislin (pus), Zarie, Zaqqum (a poisonous plant) and every sort of torture.

The period from the time of death to the day of judgment is called *Barzakh*. In the grave angels named Munkir and Nakir come and ask questions regarding beliefs about the Creator, the religion, the book, the Qibla, the prophet and the Imams. Details may be read in larger books.

### CONCLUSION.

This brief sketch of Islamic doctrines will, it is hoped, have made it clear to the reader that the articles of belief are quite simple and rational. It will be difficult for a sensible man, wishing to have a religion, to find one so reasonable as this. He will easily see that the only hope of salvation lies in Islam. It is for this reason that though (unlike Christianity and other religions) little ever done to propagate the creed, yet the spiritual sublimity of this faith never fails to attract converts from all quarters and it is hoped that (with increasing culture and independence of thought) the progress will be so



more marked in future and a day will come when Islam will be the universal religion.

Yet though Islam is one religion and the true religion, the straight road to God, it is well known that personal interests and prejudices have divided Islam into numerous sects as was predicted of it by the Prophet. He says, "My people will be divided into 73 sects, all will go to Hell except one." What a pity that even on coming to Islam one should not be able to come to the right path! New converts who are ignorant of the internal differences take Islam according to the views of any Musalman whose teachings they may come across and thus get astray. It is for this reason that we have attempted to give a brief, clear account of Imamate and also a brief statement of the main differences between Shias and Sunnis on their essential points of religion.



## APPENDIX.

## Some Shia and Sunni Differences.

## SUNNI VIEWS.

1. The word of God, be it Quran or any other, is eternal. Some have held its binding and cover to be also eternal. According to some the word of God is neither command nor prohibition nor event, nor condition, nor word, nor sound, but the sense of what is expressed in words. This they term 'Kalame Nafsi,' mental word.

2. God's attributes are distinct from His nature and have been planted upon it.

3. God is visible to the eyes of man and the faithful will see Him on the day of judgment.

## SHIA VIEWS.

1. The word of God is composed of words and particles, which God with His Infinite power creates in anything He likes. The word of God is created as anything else. It is the same composition that we have before us.

2. The attributes of God are inseparable from His being, *i.e.*, they constitute His very being.

3. God is not an object to be seen by anyone. This is impossible. He is far above the objects of the senses. He can neither be seen in this life nor the next.

4. A sinful man can be a prophet. At all events in forgetfulness he can always sin. Ashaaris hold that prior to being a prophet he may be a sinner committing sins, venial or mortal, unwittingly or knowingly. Some hold it immaterial to be a sinner except in miracles.

5. They hold the father and grandfather and many other ancestors of the Prophet to be infidels.

6. Rationally there is no necessity of having a Caliph after the Prophet.

7. It is for the people to appoint a Caliph after the Prophet. They regard it undesirable to have a divinely appointed one as it may lead to troubles in administration.

4. The prophet is sinless all his life, from birth to death. No sin, small or great, knowingly or not, after apostleship or before, is ever committed by him.

5. All were unitarians and faithful. None of his ancestors was infidel.

6. It is necessary to have an Imam and Caliph after the prophet to protect the faith. The world is never free from a living Argument (sign) of God.

7. It is the work of God and He has graciously bound Himself to appoint a Caliph of the Prophet on selecting such a man as is best fitted for the office. He should have the declaration both of God and His prophet to this effect.



8. The Imam or Caliph can be a sinner; oppression and profligacy do not incapacitate him and make him cease to be head of the Church.

9. No one in the community is sinless, only the prophet is free from certain sins in certain conditions.

10. The Caliph is a Mujtahid (*i.e.*, decides about points of difficulty by personal discretion).

11. The Imam or Caliph can be lower in position than his subjects. The people may be better than him in knowledge, morals, devotion, or in rank and honour.

12. A man who has been an infidel may become a Caliph on embracing Islam.

13. Abu Talib, the father of our Lord Ali, was not a Musalman.

8. The Imam should be sinless and infallible as the prophets. Tyrants and profligate men can never be Caliphs.

9. Fourteen Holy souls are sinless. The Prophet, his daughter and the 12 Imams.

10. This is the position of the learned divines. The Imam has divine knowledge.

11. Like the prophet it is necessary for the Imam to be superior to all in the community in all respects.

12. Never.

13. He was Muslim, faithful, the greatest support of the Prophet in his early apostolic career.

These are a few out of many differences in views (apart from differences in matters of law and discipline). A comparison of these can enable any one to decide which view is sound and reasonable. No discussion is here necessary. Readers requiring further information will refer to larger works.

Belief in the unity of God and apostleship of Mohamad and Resurrection makes a man a Musalman. For true faith (Iman) belief in the justice of God and of Imamate ought to be superadded.

However, belief in many other matters based on the above is essential for Islam and Iman respectively. Thus among the essentials of Islam is the belief that prayers five times a day are made compulsory, so are baths in cases of pollution, funeral prayers, and washing and interring the dead, zecat and fastings of Ramzan, and pilgrimage to Mecca; similarly a belief that adultery, sodomy, wine-drinking are sinful, flesh of dogs and swine is unclean and unlawful, oppression and murder are sinful. Marriage with close blood-relations is sinful, love and reverence of the Imams is compulsory. Belief in the bodily Ascension of the Prophet to Heaven is necessary. And so forth.

Similarly for true faith (Iman) it is necessary to assent to things, the rejection of which makes one outside Shiaism. Thus, the Imamate of the twelve Imams, their superiority in knowledge and other excellences, compulsoriness of their obedience. So also is held belief in the validity of the two Mutaas (one of marriage and

the other of pilgrimage) as these two are opposed to by the Sunnis. Similarly, for true faith is necessary a spirit of aversion to the enemies of the Prophet's house, murderers of Husain, and those who fought against any of the Imams. So is belief in their infallibility, denial that they were Mujtahids (*i. e.*, guessed out points of law, etc.) as they have divine knowledge.

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## APPENDIX II.

### Suggestions for Serious Enquirers after Truth:

(BY A. F. BADSHAH HUSAIN.)

The following notes are intended merely as hints for due reflection. They will indicate the lines on which an enquiry into the Truth and perfection of a revealed Religion can be profitable. The ideas are fully developed, and apply to Islam and other religions shown in my principles of Shia Theology:—

(1) It is necessary to dispel from the mind such loose ideas as that all religions are equally true or good, or that they are diverse roads to the same end. With the glaring differences in the teachings and the facts held up for belief, this can only mean they all have a certain tendency towards moral and spiritual elevation of man. This may be true, but what is that worth?

(2) Spirituality has an intellectual side, a moral side, and a purely spiritualistic side. Have the teachings of all religions an equal capacity to develop all these sides

equally or in due proportion? Christianity, it would appear trains us for idiocy and contempt of knowledge, and so Hinduism too, in a measure. The latter appears to ignore the moral side.

(3) Truth is what it is and cannot be otherwise. It is no excuse for low and degraded forms of religions that the minds of the masses cannot rise to high spiritual conceptions. In this case it is all the more necessary to constantly impress the truth, and all the more wrong to figure it in a way that the popular mind may forget and ignore it.

(4) It is wrong to suppose that the gross forms of belief (as in mythologies) were really designed to allegorise deep, profound truths. Such allegorication can be permissible only when the truth is, indeed, far above the conception of man, as for instance in the case of angels, paradise, etc., where no conception in this life can be really accurate.

(5) The proper scope of revealed religion is neither science nor philosophy, but the teaching of truths which, though having a vital bearing on man's everlasting life, are neither open to observation or experiment nor are capable to be discerned adequately by reflection. Hence many of the things taught must be dogmatic, but should not be believed indolently without full justification for belief in their teachers. Hence the most important study for Islam is of the evidences for the truth of the claims of the Prophet and the Imams.

In the degmas incapable of direct verification, it is precarious to judge by preconceived notions of probability.



Remember Brewster's attitude towards the undulatory theory of light.

(6) For morals it is not sufficient to teach virtues or to exhort men to it. A perfect religion must so devise simple religious rites and duties that, in the due performance of them, good morals may be developed naturally and evil propensities eliminated. In my Principles I have shown that the ordinary, well-known duties prescribed in Islam, prayer, fasting, etc., combined with mourning over Husain, suffice to gradually develop in one all possible virtues of head and heart, and vanish all evil tendencies—this by clear, easily intelligible psychological laws. Can any other religion claim to have made a similar provision for the development of morals?

For producing the spirit of devotion in the most careless minds the long prayers taught by the Imams act veritably as charms—and that by well-known laws of psychology. Can the prayers of any other religion compare with ours in this?

(7) Similarly for the higher spiritual teachings, it is the duty of a perfect religion to arrange that they should be brought home to all, so as to be gradually impressed upon, and realised by the most uncultured. Our religion does this by means of prayers, which all must use for diverse purposes. All the abstruse, difficult-to-realize conceptions about God are frequently dwelt upon at length with full and varied expositions.

(8) A true Religion must be perfectly rational in all its doctrines. It is Rationalism in the modern sense of

the word, without its exclusiveness, which refuses to assent to anything not capable of apprehension by the ordinary sources of knowledge.

(9) A true Religion must be a psychological religion. It must develop man as man is and ought to be. It must seek to develop all physical energies, all intellectual powers, all feelings, emotions and passions. For the last its function is merely regulative. It should not have a tendency to crush or destroy any passion or emotion. Nothing given by God is worthless.

(10) It must not ignore, it must provide for and regulate all activities of this material life and make it a part of spiritual life. As Hegel says: "If you have not your spiritual world here, you have it nowhere."

(11) It must be one for all. There should be no orders with different duties and functions—no priestcraft.

(12) It must have living evidences for its truth.

(13) But it must be remembered that the sole value of a belief consists in the patient effort with which it is arrived at, and the frankness with which a reasonable conclusion is accepted and perverse over-scepticism avoided. Hence no such profusion of evidences should be expected as would compel assent on all and do away with the necessity of enquiry. This never was and never will be. There is no moral worth of knowing that iron rusts, or in being able to say gold from iron.

(14) Mere belief is nothing unless attended with appropriate emotions. Hence love, reverence and other

appropriate emotions for the Prophet and all, down to ordinary believers, according to their measure of sanctity in the spiritual world is essential for faith and spiritual life.

(15) Limitations to the prophet's work.

(a) Prophets were sent to instruct and induce—not to infuse belief of spirituality into averse minds.

(b) They were charged to work only with purely natural means at their disposal. Could use neither superhuman means, nor superhuman sources of physical knowledge, by which anything could be effected. Else, God could have done it all by His mere Will—prophets were not sent to upset the course of evolution.

(16) Read early History of Islam carefully and judge whether all the early conversion—so sudden, and mostly after the Prophet's military success—was real conversion. Whether the facts of the lives of the Sahabas as recorded by the Sunnis themselves, bear evidence of their loving attachment to the prophet and his family. Apart from other concerns, is the feeling of love not subject to the laws of association ?

(17) Read the history of the collection of the Quran and the suppression of Prophet's traditions in early times, and their overflow later, and judge for yourselves.

(18) Carefully consider the treatment accorded to the Prophet's family and their partisans, culminating in the poisoning of Hasan and the memorable slaughter of Karbala and its after-events, and constant persecution of the Imams and their followers later, and judge whether it does not indicate a general aversion of *the people* to the Prophet's household. See whether it was not so from the beginning and from the Prophet's day. If otherwise, fix a time, and cause or causes of the change.

(19) See whether all the Omyed Caliphs were not "pagans at heart" as Khudabaksh Khan, himself a Sunni, says. Look to their open insult to and attempts to extirpate the religion. Look also to the personal lives of these and the Abbaside Caliphs and other magnates of the times.

(20) Remembering all these things carefully, decide if the accounts transmitted to us of the Prophet through these sources are to be received as accounts of friendly witnesses, or should they be considered as calumnies spread by foes. Again consider the multiplicity of other easily intelligible motives for degrading the character of the Prophet to a rake and the like.

(21) Again study the history of Sunni traditions—the enormous number of admitted liars and forgers among them, the well-known forging of traditions by Moavyah's command, their practice of tradition-mongership, and so forth, and consider whether the generality of their



traditions are worth anything—except when they tell against themselves, or in favour of the Shia views.

(22) It may thus appear that all Sunni accounts of the Prophet must be received with great caution; and the earnest enquirer after Truth will not forget this in considering the common objections based on Sunni traditions.

(23) Further, as pointed out in notes in the text, moral matters usually get sentimental colours and hence wide differences on moral matters even among civilized nations. Be sure that what you regard unworthy is really so.

(24) It will appear that the Prophet spent the prime of his life with one wife, Khadijah. His other marriages were mostly political marriages in the families of enemies. Some wives were married on moral considerations.

(25) *Toleration*.—There is a toleration of indifferentism as Uberweg says, and that is the most common among nations, the most proud for toleration. This is certainly inexcusable in a prophet or in any God-fearing man. The toleration that is based on a conviction that people doing their best to arrive at Truth are unable to subscribe to our views, is certainly commendable.

On the other side it must be remembered that no man has a right to make himself a bore as Froude says.

Of the practical utility of persecution it may be said that it is always unsuccessful when the persecuted party is right, or when either of the parties are in the wrong. It is

always successful when the persecuted class has a merely indolent belief without a shadow of justification for it, while the persecutor has obvious right on his side. And, be it remembered, idolatry is always a religion of indolence, always attended with a lack of the sense of religious responsibility. In their case it acts as a pressure under which their eyes are opened. Being once converted, even as hypocrites, they hardly ever revert to the former creed. Succeeding generations at least become real converts.

(26) This for tolerance in the abstract. It is well-known, however, that according to the Shias, none are empowered to engage themselves in Jihad in absence of the Imam. The differences in the two cases is obvious, (a) The prophet or the Imam is commissioned by God. We are not. (b) He knows best whether evil or good will come of it in the long run. (c) It is necessary to have the sanction of God for this. Hence God says of the Prophet "Caller towards God *by His permission.*" This can never be known of us.

(27) Of the wars of the Prophet, it is obvious, they were all defensive, or offensive with a defensive import. He had the work of nation-building before him, and the founding of an empire of the faithful for the stability and strength of the religion he had planted.

(28) What should be thought of a prophet, even as an ordinary statesman, who should never think of what should become of the work after him—never even so much as to say that the people had the choice in the matter.



(29) Yet the Sunnis realise the importance of Caliphate so keenly after the instance of the Sahabas, and call the Shias unfaithful for not believing in their Caliphs.

(30) Had the Prophet really completed his work of instruction, guidance and nation-building? Pity for the Prophet, if the Islam of the day was the ideal conceived by him. Could the Muslims of the day be trusted to carry on the work of guidance? The Sunni church is the result. Was any of the early followers ever noted for devotion or spiritual teachings? For subsequent development of this headless church study the law and discipline as taught by Abu Hanufa and other jurists. (Mankhul of Gazzali will give some idea of the excellence of the former.) Or consider the excesses and extravagances of Sufi saints.

(31) The Shia and Sunni points of view differ mainly in this, that the Shias judge men by their actions—the Sunnis are resolved not to do so. The Shias attach particular value to personal virtues and devotion. The Sunnis see particular spiritual excellence in having been in company of the Prophet and fighting under the Islamic standard. Forgetting that this was the old occupation of the Arabs, they consider it makes amends for all their vices, and extend it even to those who never even fought. So much is this so, that of a Caliph, apart from other moral excellences, it is reported that in the state of prayer he used to kill lice in his shirts, that in his prayers he was sometimes so engrossed with accounts of booty that he

forgot all his prayer, yet he is considered spiritually superior to our Lord Ali, whose piety and devotion are so well-known and admitted by the Sunnis. Will all this hold ?

(32) They have a curious way of reconciling the mutual enmities and quarrels of the numerous Sahabas they are bound to respect. Each of them was a Mujtahid (i.e., acted to the best of his ability and conscience). Read facts of history and decide if this will do.